



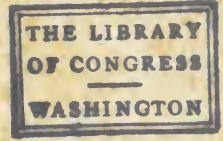






LETTERS

ON



THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY,

INCLUDING

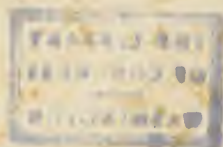
A VIEW OF THE OPINIONS

OF

SPINOZA, SCHLEIERMACHER, AND DE WETTE.

BY GEORGE RIPLEY.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
MD CCC XL.



BX9843
N8 II6

"THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY" EXAMINED.

A
LETTER

TO

MR. ANDREWS NORTON,

OCCASIONED BY HIS

"DISCOURSE BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION OF THE ALUMNI OF THE
CAMBRIDGE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL,"

ON THE 19TH OF JULY, 1839.

By AN ALUMNUS OF THAT SCHOOL.

Our guides must direct us, and yet if they fail, God hath not so left us to them, but he hath given us enough to ourselves, to discover their failings and our own duties. It is best to follow our guides, if we know nothing better; but if we do, it is better to follow the pillar of fire, than a pillar of cloud, though both possibly may lead to Canaan; — but then also it is possible that it may be otherwise. — JEREMY TAYLOR.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
M DCCC XXXIX.

CAMBRIDGE PRESS :
METCALF, TORRY, AND BALLOU.

L E T T E R .

DEAR SIR,

THE occasion, as you justly observe, which called forth your Discourse before the "Alumni of the Cambridge Theological School," was one of more than common interest. It was the first anniversary of an Association, composed of ministers whose principal bond of union is personal respect and friendship; who are united by the sympathies of education and of devotion to similar pursuits; but who neither claim authority over each others' faith, nor profess to regard uniformity of speculative opinion, as desirable, even if it were possible. Many of them have been fellow-students at the same school; a common interest in theology first brought them together, and has not since divided them; others are connected by habits of social and professional intercourse; and all, it is to be presumed, are engaged in the investigation of truth, without being restrained by a creed which they have agreed to support.

The relation, existing between the clergymen who were assembled on that day, has often been remarked as being of a rare and delightful character. It has been supposed that there were few bodies of men in the habit of meeting together, who combined more firmness of individual opinion with more guarded and delicate respect for every sincere expression of thought; who were more attached to the principle of perfect tolerance in matters of intellectual inquiry, or more consistent in its practical application; and who had more thoroughly learned the great lesson of wisdom, "in our own strivings after truth to give deserved honor to the strivings of our neighbor." In consequence of this, their mutual intercourse has been agreeable and salutary; they have shed light on each others' minds; they have warmed each others' hearts; the progress of truth has been advanced by their mutual endeavors; and it is seldom, indeed, that the widest differences of opinion have produced any interruption in the perfect bond of charity by which they are united. It is to be expected, of course, that men whose education, whose habits of mind, whose condition and pursuits in life, are, in many respects very similar, should arrive at certain common conclusions, in their independent researches after truth. This has, undoubtedly, been the case.

They agree in the rejection of many articles of faith, which have usually been held sacred in the Church ; a traditional theology has taken no strong hold of their minds ; they deem the simple truths of Christianity more important than the mysteries which have been combined with them ; but the principle of their union has never been made to consist in any speculative belief ; no test has been required as a condition of fellowship ; the mere suggestion of such a course would be met only with a smile of derision. It is not as Unitarians, that they are united in friendly relations ; those relations existed before the name of Unitarian was prevalent among us ; and it is now disclaimed by many whom we can never think of but with sentiments of profoundest veneration and love. The common tie which holds them together is attachment to liberal Christianity ; they value this, because it connects the enjoyment of religion with independence of mind, and enables them to search for truth, free from human dictation.

It must always be a beautiful spectacle to witness the union of a numerous body of men, whose relation with each other is so disinterested and holy. When we remember those disastrous ages of the Church, — so full of instruction and warning to the thoughtful student of history, — in which councils assembled for the punishment of heresy,

in which the questioner of prevailing opinions was doomed to expiate his crime by the fires of martyrdom, or to drag out a death-like existence under the ban of the hierarchy, — it cannot but be grateful to meet with an assembly of clergymen, who, in the consciousness that they are ecclesiastics, do not forget that they are men; who are more anxious to maintain a true liberty of thought, than any uniformity of creed; and who labor for the regeneration of society and the blessedness of the world, by the diffusion of the essential spirit of Christianity, rather than by the inculcation of the doctrines of a sect.

The Association, moreover, which you were called to address, is composed of the Alumni of a Theological School, which has always claimed the favor of the community, on account of its freedom from an exclusive spirit, its confidence in the safety and utility of thorough inquiry in all matters of faith, its attachment to the principles of a liberal theology, and its renunciation of the desire to impose articles of belief on the minds of its pupils. The strongest plea, on which it has relied for patronage has been expressed in language like the following. “It is not the variety of opinions which have been drawn from the same records of faith, nor the number of sects into which the Church universal has been partitioned, which have

been injurious to the Christian cause, so much as the manner in which those opinions have been maintained, and the outrageous pretensions which those sects have, with hardly an exception, advanced. The lovers of a free or liberal theology, feel it impossible that they could submit to any such dominion. They know it to be not in the nature of things, that any man can be worthy of all this deference, or can be entitled to have all his opinions respected and adopted as infallible interpretations of an infallible law. They know of no mere man who ever lived by whose name they would be willing to be called, or whose implicit disciples they would be willing to be considered. They refuse the name of Socinus with as much promptness as they would the name of Calvin; not because they are afraid of being thought to hold those opinions of Socinus which have been generally accounted obnoxious, but because they conceive no man to be worthy of the honor which they render to Christ alone, and because they will not bind themselves, nor suffer themselves to be bound by the adoption of any man's name, to become in any degree responsible for his character or sentiments, subservient to his views, or obedient to his dictates. The submission which they will not yield to one man, they will not yield to any one body of men. They

feel that they cannot and must not surrender the birth-right of their mental and religious freedom to one or to many, to a name, or a church, or a catechism, but that they must keep their minds open at all hours to receive fresh air and new light, and in a position to profit readily and unrestrainedly by the result of any examination. Entertaining such views as these of the sacredness of religious freedom, they would never call on the instructors of a school of theology to subscribe allegiance to a long list of doctrines, but would rather select those men for teachers, who, wise, honest, and competent, would refuse bondage, even as they themselves would refuse it. A liberal theology is generous as well as free. It will no more attempt to enslave, than it will submit to be enslaved. It allows all Christian privileges to all Christian men, and it acknowledges as Christian men all who seriously take the name of Christ, hearken to his instructions, and consider themselves amenable to his laws. It does not take a particular form of doctrine, and place it on a pedestal, and proclaim, ‘This is the golden image; fall down and worship it, or be cast into the fiery furnace.’ It reveres truth; it entertains its own views of what truth is, and it would have all men come to the knowledge of it; but it would effect this by invitation, and not by denunciation; by

persuading men to examine, leaving them free to choose, and granting to each one his perfect right to his own determination, and his perfect safety in it, if he has come to it in a proper temper, and by a just use of all his means. It regards spiritual pride and arrogance as worse than false doctrine, and as the prolific seed of heresies and schisms and infidelity. Exclusiveness is its utter aversion. Exclusive Christianity is its unspeakable wonder. It regards exclusive religion as quite as great a contradiction as an exclusive God. — I believe that in the whole of the Western Continent, from its southernmost cape to the northern circle, there is but one spot, a green spot, in which such a theology is publicly taught. I believe that in one theological seminary only, in this hemisphere, the Divinity School at Cambridge, do religious liberality and charitableness, conjointly with seriousness, form the spirit of theological instruction.” *

In the hope, that the Cambridge Theological School would be true to these momentous obligations, would answer to the piercing cry of our country and age for a free and generous theology, would be a tower of safety and strength against

* GREENWOOD'S *Theology of the Cambridge Divinity School*, pp. 5-7, 14.

every foe of mental liberty, we have loved it with an exceeding love. Her name has been written on the very palms of our hands ; they would sooner forget their cunning, than we could forget her welfare ; she had taught us to search boldly, though meekly and reverently, into the mysteries of God and the mind of Christ ; we took pleasure in her stones and even honored her dust ; we valued her reputation, her influence, her usefulness, as if it had been our own ; we looked to her, perhaps with exaggerated, yet with pardonable confidence, as the great hope of a progressive theology in our native land, as the fountain from which a bright and benignant light would radiate beyond the mountains of New England, and shine upon the broad and pleasant meadows of the West. This feeling has been shared in common with almost all our clergymen. We have endeavored to diffuse it in our societies ; it has kindled the enthusiasm of our most noble-minded young men ; our opulent citizens have not escaped its influence ; and nearly the whole of our religious community have regarded the School at Cambridge as their favorite child.

It must be a privilege, under any circumstances, to address an audience composed in this manner. The occasion, it would seem, could not but lift one above the region of vulgar trivialities, awak-

en thoughts of a deep and solemn character, cleanse the mind from every taint of prejudice, and suppress all consciousness of self in devotion to truth and freedom. I do not wonder that the interest of the occasion was deeply and widely felt, that it called together a numerous company of brothers and friends, such as seldom honors the festive assemblages of our University. This interest was still further enhanced by the fact, that in accordance with their character as liberal ministers, they had arrived at different conclusions in regard to several important topics of theology. In our happy state of society, as there is no very broad line of distinction between the clergy and the rest of the community, they had shared in the influences, which, within the last few years, have acted so strongly on the public mind ; with intelligent and reflecting men of every pursuit and persuasion, many of them had been led to feel the necessity of a more thorough reform in theology ; they were not satisfied that the denial of the Trinity and its kindred doctrines gave them possession of all spiritual truth ; they wished to press forward in the course which they had begun, to ascend to higher views, to gain a deeper insight into Christianity, to imbibe more fully its divine spirit, and to apply the truths of revelation to the wants of society and the progress of man.

Their experience as pastors had brought them into contact with a great variety of minds ; some of which were dissatisfied with the traditions they had been taught ; the religion of the day seemed too cold, too lifeless, too mechanical for many of their flock ; they were called to settle difficulties in theology of which they had not been advised in the school ; objections were presented by men of discernment and acuteness, which could not be set aside by the learning of books ; it was discovered that many had become unable to rest their religious faith on the foundation of a material philosophy ; and that a new direction must be given to their ideas, or they would be lost to Christianity, and possibly to virtue. The wants of such minds could not be concealed ; they were known to the ministers, if not to the world ; to neglect them would have been a sin ; the wandering sheep in the wilderness excited more interest than the ninety and nine which were safe in the fold, and to restore them to the good shepherd was counted a paramount duty.

In the course of the inquiries which they had entered into, for their own satisfaction and the good of their people, they had become convinced of the superiority of the testimony of the soul to the evidence of the external senses ; the essential character of Christianity, as a principle of spirit-

ual faith, of reliance on the Universal Father, and of the intrinsic equality and brotherhood of man, was made more prominent than the historical circumstances with which it was surrounded, at its introduction into the world ; and the signatures of truth and divinity which it bore on its front were deemed stronger proofs of its origin with God, than even the works of might which were wrought by its Author for the benefit of man. They cherished a firm and sincere conviction of the importance of these views, and their adaptation to the peculiar wants and highest interests of the community. They never disguised the results to which they had come ; they gave them a due proportion of attention in their public services ; they rejoiced in their discussion, even when it was called forth by rude attacks ; though sometimes misunderstood, they were not discouraged ; they knew the community they lived in, which will not suffer a good man to be put down ; and with a calm confidence in truth, they were content to wait for the prevalence of their views. They regarded them as the natural result of liberal inquiry in theology, chastened and purified by the influence of religious sentiment, and guided by the lights of an elevated spiritual philosophy. In the exercise of their ministry, they had been confirmed in the soundness of their ideas ; their be-

nign effects were visible among the people of their charge ; and these effects were thought to be in harmony with the spirit of Christ, nay, the necessary product of the religion which he announced. They saw their opinions rapidly spreading among the younger members of the profession, while they were regarded with charity, if not with approbation, by those whom they most honored among their seniors. No difference of speculation had estranged them from the hearts of their brethren ; no breach had been made in the sympathy which was the pervading principle of their association ; the understanding had been sacredly observed, if not formally expressed, that a profession of faith in Christ, and a sincere and virtuous character were the conditions of fellowship, rather than any agreement in theological opinion.

Such were the circumstances in which the Alumni assembled to hear the first annual Discourse before their Association. It was to be expected that the speaker on such an occasion would either confine himself to those topics which were of equal interest to all, on which there was no prominent diversity of opinion ; or that if he chose to select a subject of controversy, he would discuss it, not merely with a semblance of calmness and moderation, but with a manly adherence

to the great principles of liberal Christianity, and a scrupulous sense of justice towards the sentiments and character of his brethren.

In this respect, the Discourse, which was pronounced, appears to me not only at variance with the spirit of the occasion, but adapted to mislead the public mind, on subjects which deeply interest it. A temperate, though firm and decided examination of its statements is called for by the claims of truth and justice, the cause of mental freedom, and a regard to the progress of liberal theology and enlightened religion in our community.

I am impelled by these considerations to submit your Discourse to the test of an impartial criticism; and in the discharge of this duty, you will pardon me if I speak with great frankness, if I endeavor to be as faithful in pointing out your errors, as I am sure you would have been towards another in similar circumstances. I shall avoid all harshness of expression; for my object is not triumph, but truth; still I am aware that you cannot read my remarks without pain; and I therefore protest, in the outset, against the severity with which I shall handle your assertions being construed into discourtesy towards yourself. It is unpleasant to speak as I shall be forced to; but it will be remembered, that the subject of

controversy is not merely a speculative opinion, but involves a vindication from the charge of a grave moral offence.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the leading topic of your Discourse, you will allow me to express my disapprobation of the peculiar form, which you were pleased to adopt for the communication of your sentiments. I object to it, not merely as a matter of taste, — though much might be said in that regard, — but as adapted to make a false impression, which it is more difficult to set right, than if your manner of treating the subject had been simple and direct. The point I allude to will appear in a moment.

You commence with the assertion, (p. 4.) that, “our religion is very imperfectly understood: and received by comparatively a small number with intelligent faith.” You then announce as the theme of your Discourse (p. 5.) “the characteristics of the times and some of those opinions NOW PREVALENT, which are at war with a belief in Christianity.”

This, certainly, was a judicious opening, and I only speak the sentiments of your whole audience, when I say that it was heard with universal pleasure. It at once brought up a subject of the highest importance, of no small

difficulty, and of singular interest to our community at the present moment. It gave the promise that you would discuss the character and tendency of opinions now prevalent in the midst of us; that you would meet some of the objections which have been advanced to popular theological ideas; that you would come directly to the great questions that are at issue between different portions of the audience which you addressed. There was reason to hope that you would oppose certain substantial obstacles to the current of thought which threatens in the view of some individuals to endanger our most valuable institutions; so that they who were inclined to this direction might find their difficulties removed, their ignorance enlightened, their love of vague and visionary speculations corrected, and the truth presented in so clear and attractive a light, that they could not fail to receive it; while those who were attached to the contrary mode of thinking would be furnished with arguments sufficient to repel every alarming encroachment.

But, instead of this mode of proceeding, you adopted one which could not have been expected from your statement of the subject, and which I conceive to have been singularly irrelevant to the demands of your audience, and the nature of the occasion. Instead of meeting face to face the

opinions which have found favor with many theologians in this country, which are publicly maintained from the pulpit and the press in our own immediate community, which form the cardinal points on which speculation is divided among us, you appear studiously to refrain from all mention of them; no one could infer from your remarks, that any novel ideas had been broached in our theological world, excepting those whose origin can be traced back to the skeptical reasonings of Spinoza and Hume, and a comparatively small class of the modern theologians of Germany. You argue with considerable strength against their assumptions; but even if you had succeeded in their complete demolition, no progress would thus have been gained towards your main object; for, I venture to say, not ten copies of Spinoza's Works can be found in our vicinity; I greatly doubt whether there are ten persons among us, who have ever read as many pages of his writings; and as for Hume's "famous Essay on Miracles," no one deems it worth while to disturb its repose in the dust of the library; at least, it is so seldom that we hear its name alluded to, that we may justly regard it as having gone to sleep. The case is the same with the German theologians, to whom you refer in the body of your Discourse. They have no weight with our theological inqui-

rers ; their day is fast declining in their own country ; and no man acquainted with the progress of opinion in Germany could allude to the peculiar speculations of Paulus, for example, as exerting any perceptible influence on its present condition. The whole course of your reasoning in regard to the objections of Spinoza and Hume had no more connexion with your subject, than a refutation of the astrologers and alchemists of the middle ages. You undertook to speak of prevailing opinions ; you were understood to have in view errors that have made their appearance among ourselves ; but the doctrine which you oppose of the impossibility of miracles, on which you labor throughout a great part of your Discourse, and the annihilation of which you deem to be of such vital importance, is not known to have an advocate among our theologians. If there be one, I am sure, I never heard of him. The questions at issue in the new movement, as it is called, relate to a different subject. Your reasonings, accordingly, on the topic you chose, were thrown away. They excited no opposition, and therefore, little interest. You failed to argue the points on which there is much solicitude ; and confined yourself to one, which nobody conversant with the actual state of inquiry cares any thing about.

But although you devoted yourself to the exami-

nation of past errors, of doctrines, which, however formidable in another age, have no immediate effect on the present condition of thought, the circumstances in which you spoke, and the relations which you sustain to our theological community, could not fail to produce the impression that you had reference to existing opinions, that you were attacking ideas which were not only cherished in past centuries, and in foreign countries, but which were beginning to make progress, to exert a disastrous influence on the interests of sound thought and pure religion, in our own land. It is this ambiguity that I complain of. A want of openness is never favorable to the cause of truth. The effect on those who now read your Discourse, as it was on most of your audience, unless they exercise a more than ordinary discrimination and independence of thought, unless they possess facilities for correct information, which of course were in your power, but which few are able to command, will be precisely the same as if you had charged the opinions you opposed on those who are understood to differ from you, in your general views of theology. On former occasions, you had assumed the attitude of a chastiser of the heresies of your brethren; you had made yourself "the talk of the day" in our social circles by your zealous limitation of the

rights of free inquiry, on account of the dangerous results to which it led ; you were selected as the anniversary speaker in order that you might have a fair opportunity to do justice to your own views and practices in this respect, and sustain your position against your opponents ; many came from far and near to be present on the occasion, at no small inconvenience to themselves ; and not a man among them could doubt for a moment that you would express yourself with freedom, with clearness, with power, on the views of your brethren which were at war with your own.

Such being the case, it appears to me, that peculiar caution and delicacy were requisite, in order to avoid even the possibility of misapprehension. A sincere love of truth always leads us to be as circumspect in stating the opinions of an adversary, as our own ; and to exercise a scrupulous care, that he be not placed in a false position, made responsible for errors which he disclaims, and confounded with men with whom he has no affinity. I should expect this rule to be violated by an excited controversialist in his passion for victory ; but from a candid and ingenuous spirit, I should look for its most fastidious observance. The practical effect of this ambiguity, in other respects, is somewhat singular. It places your readers at liberty to apply your

remarks to the views of those whom you are accustomed to denounce ; they would be perfectly justified in doing so, for aught that appears in your Discourse ; and to suppose that they do not would be affectation or folly. At the same time, a person not familiar with the present relations of our theological community, a stranger who did not perceive that more was signified than said, might feel surprised that any body should take the trouble to reply to your assertions. You have given yourself the advantage, such as it is, of making an indirect attack through the medium of obsolete opinions ; and if those to whom it is applied, think it necessary to vindicate themselves, you can maintain that you had no such reference in view, and that the supposition, on their part, that you had is entirely gratuitous.

But the advantage you thus gain is momentary. It soon presents another aspect. I hardly need to state the dilemma to which you are reduced. If you meant to say that the opinions of Spinoza and Hume on the doctrine of miracles were adopted by that portion of your audience which differed from yourself, your Discourse was unjust ; if you did not mean to say this, it was nugatory. And in either case, you were bound to express yourself so that one should not be left in the dark as to what you did mean. Or, if you took it for

granted, that those opinions were held by your opponents, you advanced an invidious charge, while you were ignorant of the facts. If you persist in saying that they are held, I call for the proof.

I do not intend, however, to dwell on these points. They relate to personal ethics, rather to questions in theology ; the cause of truth, in general, is not essentially affected, by the mode which an individual adopts for the expression of his views ; and I accordingly hasten to the discussion of the chief topic which I conceive worthy of attention in the statements of your Discourse. I refer to your adoption and defence of the exclusive principle in an Address before an assembly of liberal clergymen. By the exclusive principle, I mean the assumption of the right for an individual, or for any body of individuals, to make their own private opinions the measure of what is fundamental in the Christian faith. As liberal Christians, we have long contended against this principle, as contrary to the very essence of Protestantism ; we have claimed the inherent right of private judgment, as essential to Christian freedom ; we have resisted, to the uttermost, every attempt to impose controverted points of opinion on the universal belief of the Church. We have welcomed every man as a brother, who acknowl-

edged Christ as his Master ; we have not presumed to sit in judgment on any Christian's claim to discipleship ; we have refused to entertain the question, whether he were entitled to the Christian name ; we have felt that it was not ours to give or to withhold ; and that the decision in all cases, must rest with himself. It was not because our exclusive brethren made a belief in the Trinity, a test of allegiance to Christ, that we accused them of inconsistency with the liberty of the Gospel ; but because they presumed to erect any standard whatever, according to which the faith of individuals should be made to conform to the judgment of others. It was not any special application of the principle, that we objected to ; it was the principle itself ; and assuredly, the exercise of this principle does not change its character, by reason of the source from which it proceeds. Nay, is it not aggravated by the fact, that it is sustained, not by those with whom it forms a part of their religion, but by those whose religion is identified with hostility to it ?

But the doctrine which lies at the foundation of your whole Discourse is a signal manifestation of the exclusive principle. You propose your own convictions, — and convictions, which it will appear in the sequel of this letter, are directly at war with the prevailing faith of the Church, —

as the criterion of genuine Christian belief. You maintain that the truth of Christianity can be supported by no other evidence than that which appears satisfactory to yourself; that unless we are persuaded of the divine origin of our religion by the arguments which you deem valid, we cannot be persuaded at all; and that to speak of faith in the revelations of the Gospel, unless that faith be built on the only basis which you pronounce to be good, is, in itself, a proof of delusion or insincerity. You make no allowance for the immeasurable variety of mind which is found everywhere, for the different direction which early education, natural temperament, and peculiar associations impart to men's habits of thinking, for the shifting lights which the same evidence presents, according to the circumstances in which it arrests the attention, or for the changes acquired by language and the ideas which it conveys, in the progress of ages; but you advance your principle, with the same want of reserve or qualification that a teacher of the Infallible Church would have exhibited before the Reformation; you declare that a certain kind of evidence, in your view, establishes the truth of Christianity, and that he who rests his faith on any other is an infidel, notwithstanding his earnest and open professions to the contrary. You thus, in fact, denied the name of Christian to

not a few individuals in your audience, although you avoid discussing the grounds by which their opinions are supported. For it is perfectly well known that many of our most eminent clergymen, — I will not refrain from speaking of them as they deserve, on account of my personal sympathy with their views, — repose their belief in the divine origin of Christianity on a different foundation from that which you approve as the only tenable one. Men whose names are almost a passport to the opinions they adopt, whose lives are a guaranty against all suspicion of guile, whose fervent devotion to every cause that promises the extension of religion or the good of man has become proverbial, whose candor and transparency of character is a constant memorial of the simplicity of Christ, are inclined to rest their convictions of the divinity of the Gospel on evidence which commends itself to their minds, although you may pronounce it to be valueless and deceptive. Among those who adopt this view of Christianity are clergymen who have never enjoyed the benefit of your instructions, but whose minds have been kept open to every fresh access of light, as well as their younger brethren who are deeply indebted to your counsels and example in the pursuit of truth, and who have obtained from your influence in former years, something of that

spirit of freedom, for which they are now condemned.

But according to the doctrine of your Discourse, their faith in Christianity is either a self-deception or a pretence ; the divine glory which they recognise in Christ is a vain chimera ; they are disqualified for the office of Christian teachers ; their very profession of Christianity is a blot on their characters ; it calls in question either their intellect or their conscience, or both ; they are exhorted to abandon a calling which they have no right to pursue ; and since they do not receive your construction of the evidences of Christianity, to declare to the world that they repudiate the Savior, and regard the glorious Gospel of the blessed God as the invention of man.

This application of the exclusive principle is the more remarkable, when we consider the vehemence with which you have opposed it, in reference to your own opinions. Within a few years, you have appeared as the public advocate of mental freedom ; you have spurned, with sovereign displeasure, every restraint upon your independence ; you have claimed and exercised the right of every man to form his own opinions on the doctrines of Christianity, without incurring the reproach of skepticism or insincerity ; and no one has exhibited a more indignant eloquence than

yourself at the introduction of personalities into religious discussions, at the substitution of denunciation for argument, and at an appeal to the prejudices and timidity of men, rather than to their good sense and love of truth. So long as your own right to free investigation was called in question, you displayed a singular zeal in its defence ; you rejected with just scorn, the charge of infidelity, because you cherished conceptions of Christianity at war with the faith of the great majority of Christians ; and you could hardly, if at all, admit the idea that any but a narrow and vulgar mind was capable of bringing such a charge. But you now present the same accusation against a portion of your fellow Christians, for rejecting opinions which you adopt. Instead of answering their arguments, you attack their characters. You attempt to silence them not by persuasion, but by reproach. You refuse to meet them on equal grounds ; you would first make them infidels in the eyes of the public ; and then, if ever, examine their ideas.

The first avowed advocacy and exercise of the exclusive principle among liberal Christians, as far as I know, has been by yourself. Hitherto it has been confined to Christians of a different faith. They have had reasons for their proceeding which do not exist in your case. They con-

demned those who claimed the Christian name, for the rejection of doctrines that had the sanction of the Church ; you condemn them, for not receiving opinions which are almost peculiar to yourself. They urged the necessity of doctrines which the testimony of religious consciousness had pronounced to be true ; you denounce the opinion that divine truth can be perceived by the intuitions of consciousness. They insisted on the belief of doctrines which they held essential to the salvation of the soul ; you insist on hypotheses which you confess have only a strong probability in their favor. They contended for doctrines which were supposed to form the very substance of Christianity ; you contend for a method of establishing its evidence.*

* I cannot but refer the candid reader to some more complete discussions of the exclusive system than I am able to give in this place. The times demand a recurrence to first principles, if we would not forget the essential grounds of our existence as a distinct Christian denomination. If any one will read the "Discourse on the Exclusive System," by Dr. Walker, and the "Essay on the System of Exclusion and Denunciation," by Dr. Channing, not to mention other productions of the last named writer, he will perceive, I think, that their reasonings against exclusiveness are no less applicable to the present case, than to those which they had immediately in view. It cannot be repeated too often, that it is the intrinsic character of the exclusive principle, which we condemn, not its special application. Dr. Walker very pertinently remarks, (Discourse, p. 4. 1st Ed.) "Men have always been willing that every one should think as he pleases,

I have thus far confined my remarks to your adoption of the exclusive principle, without a direct consideration of the doctrine, in support of which you have given that principle the sanction of your authority. It would be a glaring inconsistency with all our modes of thought, with all our practical usages, as liberal Christians, for an individual to make any speculative opinion the standard of Christian faith, however true and important the opinion might be in itself. But the inconsistency is aggravated, when the doctrine which is maintained on exclusive grounds can easily be shown to be almost peculiar to the individual by whom it is announced, at variance with the general belief of Christians in every age, incapable of support from the teachings of Scripture and right reason, and involving consequences of an irreligious and alarming character.

so long as he will please to think as they do; and this, especially when the clergy have been called in to decide the question, has commonly been the extent of their notions of religious liberty. Every sect has preached up just enough of liberality to answer its own purpose, that is to say, just enough to secure an indulgence to its own deviations from the traditionary faith. But further than this, almost every one has agreed, that liberality must be a very dangerous thing. All have allowed a certain latitude of thinking, within which liberty may be enjoyed; but if any one should go beyond this, though in the exercise of the same liberty, he is to be regarded and treated as an apostate from the religion."

I sincerely regret that I am obliged by fidelity to my subject to show that this is the case with the leading doctrine of your Discourse. The leading doctrine, I say, for although you merely declare it, without advancing any considerations in its favor, without noticing the objections which press it on all sides, the manner in which you apply it to the defence of your views, evinces that it occupied the most prominent place in your mind, and that you intended it should form the strongest impression produced by your Discourse.

The doctrine to which I allude, and which I now mean to discuss, is that THE MIRACLES RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE THE ONLY PROOF OF THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

You assert, (p. 5.) “that the divine authority of him whom God commissioned to speak to us in his name was attested, in the *only* mode in which it could be, by miraculous displays of his power.” Christianity offers, (p. 18.) “in attestation of the truths of the facts, which it reveals, the *only* satisfactory proof, the authority of God, evidenced by miraculous display of his power.” (p. 22.) “*No proof* of the divine commission of Christ could be afforded but through miraculous displays of God’s power.” But I need not multiply quotations to show your advocacy of a doctrine, for which,

I presume, you will not disclaim being responsible.

The question at issue, therefore, ought to be distinctly understood. It is not concerning the divine mission of Jesus Christ. The certainty of that will be at the foundation of my reasonings; and it is admitted, as far as I know, in all the controversies to which the subject has given rise in our own country.

Nor is it, whether Jesus Christ performed the miracles ascribed to him in the New Testament. I shall hereafter allude to the doubts which are felt by many excellent Christians on this point; but for my own part, I cannot avoid the conclusion, that the miracles related in the Gospels were actually wrought by Jesus. Without being blind to the difficulties of the subject, I receive this view, according to my best knowledge and understanding, on the evidence presented; and in this belief I am joined by a large number of those, against whom your charge of infidelity is alleged among ourselves.

Neither does the question, I am about to consider, relate to any philosophical explanation of the miracles of Christ. I believe that he gave health to the sick, sight to the blind, and life to the dead; and my explanation of these facts is that presented in the New Testament. "No man

could do the miracles which he did, except God were with him.”* “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good; for God was with him.”† If you have any different, or any better explanation to offer of these facts, it would furnish an interesting object of examination, but can form no part of the present discussion.

Nor, finally, does the question relate to the validity of miracles as the credentials of a divine messenger. That question, it is true, forms an important topic of theological science; much vague and superficial thought is exercised concerning it; it is often presented in a manner, adapted to awaken the most lively doubts; and it demands a wise and thorough revision, before, in the present state of opinion, it can receive an answer that will satisfy the earnest and reflecting Christian inquirer. But this is, by no means, the question at issue on the present occasion.

The point now to be considered is simply this, Are miracles the only evidence of the divine origin of Christianity?

Before proceeding to the arguments which prove that this position cannot be sustained, I

* John iii. 2.

† Acts x. 38.

must notice a palpable error, into which you have been led by assuming the truth of the principle in question, without examining its foundation. This error pervades the whole of your reasoning, and must destroy its weight with every logical thinker. You confound two propositions which are essentially distinct ; and you appear to have no suspicion that a distinction was necessary. This want of discrimination is the cause of a certain obscurity and vagueness in your statements, which make one doubtful at times, whether he has rightly apprehended their meaning. But it is sufficiently clear, that you make no distinction in your own mind, and express none in your Discourse, between a belief in a divine revelation, and in the miracles alleged in its support. You utterly confound the divine origin of Christianity, and a certain class of the proofs of its divine origin.

Now the truth of the divine origin of Christianity is expressed by one proposition ; the reality of the miracles of Jesus, by another ; these propositions are clearly distinguished in all accurate thought ; they are no less clearly distinguished in the history of opinions ; and it by no means follows, that because a man receives or denies the one, he receives or denies the other also.

There are many Christians who have been convinced of the divine origin of Christianity not by

miracles, but by other evidence ; they acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Savior of the world ; they believe that the Divine Word which was in the beginning with God was made flesh in the Son of Mary, because they have seen his glory, full of grace and truth ; they bow to his authority as to the authority of God ; they rejoice in the revelations which he was inspired to make ; but in the progress of inquiry, they have become sensible to the difficulties which encumber the theory of miracles ; they know the doubts which have been cast on their historical evidence ; they are told by the most acute and learned critics, — and you, Sir, are among the number,* — that some of the mira-

* In allusion to the account of the nativity of Christ given by Luke, it is said by Mr. Norton, that “ the cast of the narrative has something of a poetical, and even fabulous character.” NORTON’S *Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*, Additional Notes, p. liv.

“ Fictions began early to be propagated, concerning the nativity and childhood of Jesus. To these fictions the narrative [in the first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew] appears to belong from its intrinsic character. In the story of the Magi, we find represented a strange mixture of astrology and miracle.” *Ibid.* p. lix.

“ The narrative of Luke is, as I have said, in a style rather poetical than historical. With its real miracles, the fictions of oral tradition had probably become blended ; and the individual by whom it was committed to writing probably added what he regarded as poetical embellishments. With our present means of judging, however, we cannot draw a precise line between the truth, and what has been added to the truth.” *Ibid.* pp. lxi. lxii.

cles related in the Bible, bear the marks of falsehood on their face, that the most probable account to be given of them is that they are legendary inventions ; and can any one be surprised, that though believing in Christ, and in his divine mission, they cannot say that they believe in the reality of the miracles ; at least, they are in doubt ;

The miracle of the appearing of the saints after the resurrection of Christ is spoken of as follows. "Who, it may be asked, were these saints? How long had they lain in their sepulchres? — After Christ's resurrection, it is said, they left their sepulchres and went into the holy city. In this extraordinary statement we may recognise, I think, the fabrication of some relater of the story. If these views are correct, the story must be regarded as a fable." *Ibid.* pp. lxviii. lxix.

The passage, (Luke xxii. 43, 44.) which describes the "agony and bloody sweat" of the Redeemer, is thus commented on. "The objections which present themselves to the passage, considered in its intrinsic character, are the following. The agony of Christ is represented as existing after the angel had been sent to strengthen him. The bloody sweat described, is such as we have no authority for believing was ever produced by mere distress of mind, if it have been by any other cause. The account appears at variance with the character of Christ, and especially with that calmness, self-possession, and firmness, which he manifested during the evening and night previous to his apprehension." *Ibid.* p. lxxxix.

Now to a large majority of Christians, this language will appear like gross infidelity. It does not alter the case to say, that it was not intended as such. Does not the author see that this bandying of ungrateful epithets tends directly to silence all calm and impartial discussion of scientific theology? I leave it to a candid Christian community to judge whether such a writer is authorized to accuse his brethren of infidelity.

and they wish to suspend their judgment until further examination.

Such a state of mind, I well know, is not uncommon. There are few persons, who are called by their inclination or their profession to intimate religious communings with their fellow-men, that have not met with frequent instances of it. I cannot but express my surprise that you should not have known any individuals of this character, in the course of your experience; or, if you have known such, that you should feel warranted to condemn them as you do. I own that I see no grounds on which their rigid and peremptory exclusion from the name of Christians can be justified. In certain cases, this state of mind becomes permanent; in others, it only forms one stage in the religious experience; the strong conviction of the divinity of Christ himself, leads to an equally strong conviction of the divinity of his works.

I can hardly suppose that the description I have here presented will not be perfectly intelligible to yourself as well as to every reflecting reader; but that I may not be misunderstood by those who find it difficult to seize a point of view with which they are not familiar, it may be well to illustrate my statement by a reference to the form in which many, at the present day, believe in the

divine legation of Moses. Indeed I am not sure that in regard to the religion of the Old Testament, you would not adopt these conceptions yourself. The believers I allude to, are persuaded that God spoke by Moses ; a special divine interposition seems necessary to them in order to account for the origin of Judaism ; but yet they find reason to doubt the literal truth of the Mosaic miracles. These miracles, in their view, extend too far into a dark and uncertain period of antiquity to impart a strong confidence, as the foundation of faith ; if their reception was essential to a belief in the inspiration of Moses, this fact would fail of reception also ; but from other considerations, while they are not satisfied as to the reality of the Old Testament miracles, they are persuaded of the divine origin of the Old Testament religion.

In applying this case to the one already mentioned, the parallel should not be pushed too far. I do not mean to compare the inspiration and miracles of Moses with the inspiration and miracles of Christ, in respect to the divine power which they displayed, or the evidence by which they are supported ; but I maintain that precisely as certain individuals believe in the divine legation of Moses, before they are satisfied in regard to his miracles, so certain individuals may believe

in the divine mission of Christ, before they are satisfied concerning his miracles.

Let us bear this distinction in mind, while we examine one or two passages in the Discourse, which relate to this point. It will thus be evident that you lost sight of a fundamental difference; and that, accordingly, as your subsequent reasonings are founded on error, they can have nothing but error as the consequence.

“By a belief in Christianity, we mean the belief that Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion; and that the divine authority of him whom God commissioned to speak to us in his name was attested, in the only mode in which it could be, by miraculous displays of his power.” (p. 5.) A part of this passage has already been quoted in another connexion; I refer to it now, for the purpose of pointing out the confusion of thought, of which I have spoken.

“Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion.” This is a distinct, independent proposition. I may admit it, without being obliged to admit any other, which it does not logically include; but that this revelation “is attested by miraculous displays of God’s power” is a quite different proposition; there is no necessary connexion between them; and any argument, which you attempt to build on the supposition of such a

connexion, falls to the ground. The question in the first case is, Whether I believe, that Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion ; how that revelation is attested is another question ; and because I do not accept your answer to the last, you have no right to conclude that I give a negative answer to the first.

You are thus brought to the following alternative. If you say, that the first part of your definition of a belief in Christianity is incomplete, and requires the second part for its complement ; you maintain that one can believe “that Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion,” and yet be destitute of the essential Christian faith ; or in other words, he can believe in the divine revelation of Christianity, and be an unbeliever at the same time. If you say that the first part of your definition is sufficient of itself, you abandon your ground, and confess that you have brought the charge of infidelity, without cause. If you say, finally, that the first part of your definition necessarily involves the second, you beg the question in dispute ; and I need not tell you, what would be the value of reasoning that starts with a fallacy.

Again, you observe, (p. 21.) that “if it were not for the abuse of language that has prevailed, it would be idle to say, that in denying the mira-

cles of Christianity, the truth of Christianity is denied." We here find the same unhappy confusion. You do not perceive that a belief in the Christian revelation is one thing, and a belief in the miracles which are claimed in its support is another. Whether the assertion you allude to were idle or not, would depend on two circumstances. First, whether any believer professed to receive Christianity as a divine revelation, while he doubted the miracles; the miracles being not the revelation itself, but an element in its proof; and secondly, whether you called in question the reality of his belief in the revelation, on account of his doubt of the miracles. If these circumstances existed, the assertion would not be idle. But it would contain a grave accusation, and one somewhat difficult of proof; one, indeed, to which it is not easy to attach any definite meaning; namely, that a man who believed the divine origin of Christianity, denied the truth of Christianity.

You continue the same train of thought as follows. "It is in vain to attempt to strike out what relates directly or indirectly to the miraculous authority and works of Christ, with the expectation that any thing consistent or coherent will remain. It is as if one were to undertake to cut out from a precious agate, the figure which nature

has inwrought, and to pretend, that by the removal of this accidental blemish, the stone might be left in its original form." (p. 23.) This is a beautiful illustration; but an illustration is not an argument; and it sometimes dazzles the eye, so that it cannot perceive the truth. It is so in this case. You confound the "divine authority" of Christ with his "miraculous works." You thus lose the force of your comparison. It would have been more pertinent, if you had said, that as he who removes the frame in which a precious stone is set does not destroy the gem, so he who doubts the miraculous accounts which form the outside of Christianity, does not necessarily deny the divine origin of the religion itself.

The distinction which is now insisted on cannot be set aside by the assertion that the divine mission of Christ is itself a miracle. For in that case, you change the question at issue, which relates not to the divine mission of Christ, but to the evidence by which it is supported. If you say, that a belief in the divine mission of Christ is all the belief in miracles you contend for, you acknowledge that you have brought a groundless charge against your opponents; for the divine mission of Christ they have never denied. But if you say, that the divine mission of Christ cannot be separated from the miracles, usually al-

leged as proof, you confound two points, which, as we have seen, are essentially distinct ; this confusion can be justified only by the principle that “miracles are the sole proof of a divine revelation ;” but in assuming this principle, you assume what is not yet settled ; and what, I shall show, if I do not deceive myself, has no evidence in its favor.

It has been my purpose, in the preceding remarks, to point out the looseness of reasoning, with which you attempt to support the exclusive doctrine of your Discourse. I have shown, as I trust, that a denial of the divine origin of Christianity, and a denial of the miracles related in the New Testament, are two different things ; that there is no real or necessary connexion between them ; but it will be perceived by every accurate thinker, that this statement does not affect the question concerning the reality of the miracles. It does not deny them ; it does not bring them under suspicion ; it leaves them just where they were before ; great problems in the experience of man to be resolved by the united aids of history and philosophy. I have already stated, that the evidence by which they are supported, on the whole, appears satisfactory to my mind, though I have no disposition to force my conviction on the minds of others.

I proceed now to an examination of the doctrine of your Discourse, that the evidence of miracles is the only proof of a divine revelation.

I. The intelligent reader will at once be struck with the boldness, the extravagance, and the novelty of this doctrine. If he has paid the slightest attention to theological inquiries, and is acquainted with the manner in which the evidences of Christianity have usually been presented, he will wonder at the radical innovation which you attempt to introduce into a familiar and important topic of theological science. Heretofore, it has been counted a signal excellence of Christianity, that it was capable of proof, by a great variety of evidence. In this respect, its adaptation to be a universal religion has been earnestly set forth; its ablest defenders have supported it on the ground that it appealed to a multiplicity of proofs; and its claims to the character of a revelation from God have been maintained by manifold considerations, according to the tendency of the minds, to which it was addressed.

Thus, while the argument from miracles has formed a prominent topic of discussion, other arguments have been derived from prophecy and its fulfilment, from the character of Christ, from the excellence of his doctrine, from the wisdom and comprehensiveness of his plan, from the rapid

propagation of Christianity in the most unpropitious circumstances, from the tendency of the Gospel to satisfy the wants of the soul, from the actual effects it has produced on the civilization and happiness of the world, and from its harmony with the suggestions of the higher nature of man.

Each of these arguments, — and I have not attempted to enumerate all that have been alleged, — has been regarded as powerful in itself; some of them alone sufficient to produce a rational faith; certainly a conviction that Christianity is more probably true than false, which, according to your Discourse, is all that can be sustained on the highest grounds of evidence; and, taken together, they have been supposed to form a moral demonstration, impregnable against the assaults of infidelity. The process of reasoning has been, to advance directly from these proofs to the divine origin of Christianity, to make the same inference from them as to the mission of Christ, which you derive from the miracles.

We find, accordingly, that different writers have discussed different branches of the Christian evidences; one is distinguished for his masterly exposition of the argument from prophecy; another, for his admirable illustration of the internal characteristics of Christianity; another, for his

accurate historical investigation of its effects on the social condition of man ; a fourth establishes the coincidence between the truths of revelation and the testimony of reason ; while another argues from the miracles of Christ to the divinity of his mission, though he does not maintain with yourself that they are the only satisfactory proof. In like manner, it is found that the effects of these arguments vary with the natural disposition and mental habits of the individuals to whom they are presented. Some are powerfully affected by one portion of the Christian evidence ; others, by that of a different character ; miracles are conclusive to one, prophecy to another, and the intrinsic nature of Christianity, to a third ; what appears little short of mathematical demonstration to me, is lightly esteemed by my neighbor ; while that which produces conviction in his mind, fails of any perceptible influence on mine.

Now, if I rightly apprehend your doctrine, you maintain that as miracles are the only adequate proofs of a divine revelation, all the other branches of evidence which have usually been relied on, are destitute of independent force ; they are good to confirm the probability of miracles ; but for nothing else. You observe (p. 21.) that, “ it has been vaguely alleged, that the *internal evidences* of our religion are sufficient ; but this can be said by

no one who understands what Christianity is, and what its internal evidences are." "The internal evidence of Christianity," according to your Discourse, (p. 25.) consists in this circumstance, namely, that "the history of Jesus being full of accounts of his miracles, every thing in his history, what relates to himself and what relates to others, is conformed to this fact, and to the conception of him as speaking with authority from God." The internal evidence, therefore, is no proof in itself of the divine authority of Christ ; it is reduced to a mere negative element ; nothing but a condition for the validity of the external evidence ; the Gospel is deprived of all inherent marks of truth and divinity. You thus deny the strength of the arguments, by which the faith of a multitude of Christians is sustained ; but in so doing, you advance a principle, which I will not call "the latest form of infidelity," but which is certainly at war with the prevailing faith of Christians in every age of the Church.

I do not indeed assert that this doctrine of the exclusive validity of miraculous evidence is original with yourself. It may have been advanced by theological innovators in former ages ; but it has never gained credit with any considerable portion of the church ; and, until it was broached by an eminent Scottish divine of our own day, —

a writer, in allusion to whose work on the "Evidences of Christianity," you have pronounced to be "thoroughly ignorant of the subject," * — it could hardly be said to have received a public advocacy as a principle of theology. The honor of bringing it forward is shared between yourself and Dr. Thomas Chalmers. Differing as you do from him on other points, on this, you take possession of his ground. The identity of doctrine produces even a similarity of expression. Dr. Chalmers declares, that independent of revelation, "of the invisible God, we have no experience whatever." † You remark, that the mere fact of revelation "introduces God within the sphere of human experience." ‡ Dr. Chalmers observes, that "in the miracles of Christ, the existence of God is laid before us by an evidence altogether distinct from the natural argument of the schools." § You maintain, that "the miraculous communication from God to men makes his existence a reality to our minds." || Dr. Chalmers insists that the only internal evidence which is entitled to credit, is that taken from "the marks of

* NORTON'S *Statement of Reasons*, p. 98.

† CHALMERS' *Works*, p. 10.

‡ *Discourse*, Note ii. p. 64.

§ CHALMERS, *Ibid.* p. 58.

|| *Discourse*, Note ii. p. 64.

truth and honesty in the performance itself," "the consistency of the particulars with what we already know from other sources of information." * You contend that the only internal evidence which is entitled to credit, is that taken from "the consistency in the representations given by the different evangelists, of the actions and words of Christ, as a messenger from God to men," † and from other similar considerations. Dr. Chalmers "disclaims all support, from what is commonly understood by the internal evidence, consisting of those proofs that Christianity is a dispensation from heaven, which are founded upon the nature of its doctrines and the character of the dispensation itself." ‡ You assert that no one who "understood" the subject would rely upon this evidence. § Dr. Chalmers, however, tells us, that in this course of reasoning, he deviates from "the general example of those who have written on the Deistical controversy," || and he assigns some plausible arguments in favor of this deviation. You do not intimate that your procedure is novel; nor do you present any reasons in its defence. I ought to add, in justice to Dr. Chalmers, that, at a subsequent period, he retracted his position.

* CHALMERS' *Works*, p. 48.

† *Discourse*, p. 26.

‡ *Works*, p. 48.

§ *Discourse*, p. 21.

|| *Works*, p. 48.

The fallacy and dangerous effects of his doctrine were ably pointed out ; * and in the preface to a new edition of his Work, he modifies his statements, as follows, — thus virtually abandoning the whole ground. “ The Author is far from asserting the study of the historical evidence to be the only channel to a faith in the truth of Christianity. How could he, in the face of the obvious fact, that there are thousands and thousands of Christians, who bear the most undeniable marks of the truth having come home to their understanding ‘ in demonstration of the Spirit and of power ’ ? They have an evidence within themselves, which the world knoweth not, even the promised manifestations of the Savior. This evidence is a ‘ sign to them that believe.’ ” †

I will now adduce a part of the historical testimony, which shows that the doctrine of the exclusive validity of miraculous evidence receives no support from the general faith of the Church.

* See a judicious criticism of Dr. Chalmers’ argument, in a valuable treatise, entitled “ Principles of Christian Evidence illustrated, by an Examination of Arguments subversive of Natural Theology and the Internal Evidence of Christianity, advanced by Dr. T. Chalmers.” By Duncan Mears, Professor of Theology in King’s College, Aberdeen. It is said that this little volume was the means of convincing Dr. Chalmers of the error of his doctrine.

† *Works*, Preface to Evidences of Christianity.

The early Christian apologists, in their defence of the Gospel, did not confine themselves to any single branch of the evidences. So far from regarding miracles as the only proof, they laid comparatively small stress on their importance. The argument from miracles was slighted, while great use was made of that from prophecy.* Whoever regarded Jesus as the Son of God was acknowledged as a disciple, without reference to the foundation on which his faith was built. I will not weary you with a detail of evidence, in illustration of this fact. The following passage from one of our most learned scholars, whose acquaintance with Christian antiquity entitles his statements to great weight, contains the substance of the matter in a small compass. Speaking of Justin Martyr, he observes, "of the evidence from miracles he scarcely takes any notice. Perhaps the cause may be traced to the popular belief of the age. The efficacy of incantations and magic forms part of this belief, common alike to Christians and Pagans. Miracles were regarded as of no rare occurrence, and they were supposed to be wrought by magical arts. Christianity might then have the support of miracles, but this support would be regarded as of trifling

* See TZSCHIRNER'S *Geschichte der Apologetik*, pp. 148 - 152.

importance by those who were believers in the reality of charms and sorcery. The miracle might be admitted, but the evidence derived from it could be invalidated by ascribing it to the effects of magic. That the early Fathers and Apologists really felt a difficulty of this kind, there can be no doubt. The Jews had set the example by attributing the miracles of our Savior to a demoniacal agency. That the heathen trod in their steps by ascribing them to magical influences, we gather from a hint, Justin himself has incidentally dropped, and Origen expressly affirms it as regards Celsus. Here then was a *grand objection to the evidence from miracles*, and one which the Fathers, who were themselves firm believers in the powers of magic and demoniacal influences, must have found it exceedingly difficult to remove.”* It does not meet the point, to say that this objection was founded on a popular superstition of the primitive ages ; it is sufficient that the objection was felt ; for, therefore, some other evidence was deemed important ; and, therefore, in fine, the early apologists did not hold to the modern doctrine, that miracles are the only proof of a divine revelation.

* *Christian Examiner*, vol. vii. p. 156. Art. on Justin Martyr, by ALVAN LAMSON.

The same view concerning the value of miracles was held by the original founders of the Protestant Church. They express themselves in language, which reminds us of the most spiritual writers of a later age, in defence of the testimony addressed to the soul, compared with that addressed to the senses. The miracles of Christianity, in their opinion, were, by no means, the only foundation of belief in Christ. On the contrary, there were other evidences of a more impressive and convincing character. They relied much on the proof taken from Christian experience. The religion, it was argued, which had regenerated the soul, must be from God. I will quote but one or two passages from the great Reformer himself, which are in direct opposition to the doctrine of your Discourse.

“People cry it up as a great miracle, that Christ made the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lepers clean; and, it is true, such works are miraculous signs; but Christ regards his influence on the soul as far more important than that on the body; for as the soul excels the body, so do the miracles wrought on the former excel those wrought on the latter. He distinguishes, therefore, two kinds of miraculous works; and it still continues to be the fact, and it will continue till the last day, that Christ daily and always performs

miraculous works. The former, we admit, he rarely performs ; so he did when on earth ; for he did not give sight to many blind, he did not heal all the sick ; he left many blind and not healed. And what if he had given sight or hearing to a whole heap of people, nay, had raised them from the dead ? For such signs were merely for the purpose of founding the Christian Church. Hence, such outward signs and miracles are neither eternal nor common. But the moral signs which Christ regards as miracles, never cease.” *

“The miracles, which Christ wrought on the body, are small and almost childish, compared with the high and true miracles, which he constantly performs in the Christian world by his divine, almighty power. For instance, that Christianity is preserved on the earth ; that the word of God and faith in him can yet hold out ; yea, that a Christian can survive on earth against the devil and all his angels ; also against so many tyrants and factions ; yea, against our own flesh and blood. The fact that the Gospel remains and improves the human heart, — this is indeed to cast out the devil, and tread on serpents, and speak with tongues, for those visible miracles were merely signs for the ignorant, unbelieving crowd,

* LUTHER'S *Werke*, (Walch's Ed.) vol. xii. p. 1542.

and for those who were yet to be brought in ; but for us, who know and believe, what need is there of them ? For the heathen, indeed, Christ must needs give external signs, which they could see and take hold of ; but Christians must needs have far higher signs, compared with which the former are earthly. It was necessary to bring over the ignorant with external miracles, and to throw out such apples and pears to them as to children ; but we, on the contrary, should boast of the great miracles, which Christ daily performs in his church.” *

I come now to a more recent period. Time would fail me, if I were to attempt to quote a thousandth part of what has been written in opposition to your principle. I might indeed transcribe nearly the whole of modern English Theology, with the exception of a few writers, who were led by the philosophy of Locke to attach an extravagant value to external evidence. It everywhere recognises the fact, that miracles are not the only proof of Christianity, and strongly insists on other arguments which furnish a valid defence of its divine origin. I will begin with Dr. Barrow, a man whose familiarity with mathematical demon-

* LUTHER'S *Werke*, (Walch's Ed.) vol. xi. p. 1338.

stration did not blunt his mind to the finer distinctions of moral evidence, and who certainly is not usually addicted to what is either novel, or visionary, or heretical.

In the introduction to his admirable Discourse on "The Excellency of the Christian Religion," he remarks, "it is my intent to endeavor now some declaration and proof, by representing briefly some peculiar excellencies and perfections of our religion; which may serve to evince the truth, and evidence the wisdom thereof; to make good that our religion well deserveth the privilege it doth claim of a divine extraction, that it is not an invention of man, but as Paul calleth it, the wisdom of God, proceeding from no other but the God of truth and wisdom. It is indeed a common subject and so the best ever should be; it is always profitable and now seasonable to inculcate it, for the confirmation of ourselves and the conviction of others, in this age of wavering and warping towards infidelity." *

But according to your doctrine, nothing could be more injudicious than this course; for it would divert the attention from the only satisfactory evidence of the truth of Christianity; and instead of putting a stop to infidelity, would favor its progress.

* BARROW'S *Sermons*, vol. iv. p. 350.

A similar testimony is given by one of the ablest defenders of Christianity, that the English Church can boast of, Dr. Samuel Clarke. "The practical duties, which the Christian religion enjoins, are all such, as are most agreeable to our natural notions of God, and most perfective of the nature and conducive to the happiness and well-being of men ; that is, Christianity, even in this single respect, as containing alone and in one consistent system all the wise and good precepts that ever were taught singly and scatteredly, and many times but very corruptly by the several schools of the philosophers, ought to be embraced and practised by all rational and considering Deists, as highly probable, even though it had NO EXTERNAL EVIDENCE, to be of divine original."* "Let any impartial person judge, whether a religion that tends manifestly to the recovery of the rational part of God's creation, to restore men to the imitation and likeness of God, and to the dignity and highest improvement of their nature, has not WITHIN ITSELF an intrinsic and very powerful evidence of its being TRULY DIVINE. Let any man of an honest and sincere mind consider whether its practical doctrine has not even in itself the *greatest marks of a divine original*. On this

* CLARKE'S *Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation*, p. 213.

consideration alone, all sincere inquirers must needs be strongly inclined to embrace the Christian religion ; to believe that it is truly divine ; and to entertain it with all cheerfulness, as what in itself has those manifold marks of goodness and perfection, which are themselves *sufficient to satisfy* a good man, that it cannot be any thing else than a *revelation from God*, even though it had wanted all OUTWARD PROOFS, AND DIVINE AND MIRACULOUS TESTIMONIES.” *

There is no end to citations like these, and I will content myself with referring to one more foreign writer, who is no less attractive on account of the clearness and simplicity of his style, than the sobriety and justness of his reasonings. I mean Dr. Alexander Gerard, Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen. “The external evidences of Christianity,” says Dr. Gerard, “are miracles and prophecy ; these are the directest proofs of its divinity. Its internal evidence, however, has likewise considerable force ; much greater force, it might easily be shown, than some Christian writers have allowed it. This evidence arises from its excellence. — Our Savior and his Apostles were led by the objections of unbelievers to assert, not only that the Gospel is excellent, but

* CLARKE’S *Truth and Certainty*, &c. pp. 216, 217.

also that its excellence is a real evidence of its divinity. Our Savior exhibited this evidence in its full strength. He delivered doctrines which were really excellent, and bore clear marks of truth and divinity. He left his hearers to feel the excellence of his religion, and from their feeling of its energy to conclude for themselves, that it was of heavenly original. It was not by means of his encomiums, but by means of their own perceptions, that great numbers discovered the features of divinity in his discourses.” *

Nor are the opinions of orthodox theologians in our own country less at variance with your doctrine that miracles are the only evidence of a divine revelation.

“The holiness of the life of Christ,” says President Dwight, “is another proof of the divine origin of the Gospel; a proof not less solid than the miracles, although, perhaps, less frequently allowed its full force.” †

An eminent citizen and scholar, of whom this country is justly proud, has devoted a large space in a work on the proofs of revealed religion, to a consideration of the “arguments for the divine origin of Christianity, which may be drawn from

* GERARD'S *Genius and Evidence of Christianity*, pp. ix. x. 127, 6, 7.

† DWIGHT'S *Theology*, vol. II. p. 235.

that internal evidence of truth which its doctrines contain." * "These internal evidences of Christianity," says Mr. Verplanck, "are those on which it is most generally, and far most sincerely and fervently, believed ; so that the unlettered Christian, who is utterly ignorant of that body of history and learning which attests the veracity of the Gospel narrative ; and who, so far from being able to refute the objections of an ingenious opponent, would find it exceedingly difficult to explain the reasons of his belief to another, may yet possess a ground of confidence in its truth, not resting upon logical argument, yet of a strictly rational character, which, in his mind, could derive but little additional strength from the learned labors of Lardner, the ingenuity of Warburton, or the sagacity of Paley."†

"The most convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity," says one of our most esteemed religious writers, Mr. Jacob Abbott, "is that which results from witnessing its moral power over the human heart. I have often heard it remarked, by men amply qualified to investigate such subjects, that the power of the Bible, as they have often seen it exerted, has made a far stronger impres-

* VERPLANCK'S *Essay on the Evidences*, p. 123.

† *Ibid.* p. 121.

sion upon them, in favor of its DIVINE ORIGIN, than any examination of the LABORED ARGUMENTS of learned men." *

The exclusive doctrine of your Discourse presents a striking contrast to the views of the leading writers, whom, as liberal Christians, we are accustomed to venerate. No class of men have dwelt more earnestly or more successfully on the proof of the divine origin of Christianity, from considerations independent of miracles, than the honored theologians whose names are identified with mental freedom and religious progress in this country.

I commence with Buckminster, whose generous spirit passed away from us too early; in whose presence intolerance stood rebuked; "whose intrepid mind, nothing could depress; whose vigorous understanding broke so easily the little meshes, which were spread to entangle it." The character of Christ was the ground on which he loved to rest his faith in the Gospel; like the Apostle, he saw the divine glory in the face of Jesus. He did not believe, according to the representation of your Discourse, that we can have no "perception," or "intuition" of the truth of

* ABBOTT'S *Young Christian*, p. 145.

Christianity; that outward prodigies are essential to a living faith within the soul; though fond of historical research, and attached to the evidence of miracles, so far from deeming them the only proof of the divinity of the Gospel, he declares that there is much evidence beside them, and superior to them; that a constant study of Christianity furnishes a constant increase of its proofs; and that having satisfied himself, as far as possible, concerning the historical testimony to its truth, the learner should direct his attention to the internal evidence, the character of Christ, the nature of his instructions, and the spirit of the Gospel. "In this way," says Buckminster, "if he is an inquirer of an ingenuous disposition, and of a heart warmed with the love of virtue, he will love the Gospel too well to permit any relics of doubt to disturb him; he will be unable to reject what appears so divine, and what he finds so powerful, or to think it to be any thing else than what he wishes it to be,—the word of God." *

This appears to me to be the soundest theology, clothed in beautiful and impressive language; and it involves more than is obvious on a hasty perusal. It comprises almost every thing, on the

* BUCKMINSTER'S *Sermons*, (3d Ed.) pp. 18, 19.

present subject, which I should be disposed to contend for. According to this statement, the relics of doubt, which are left, after the historical testimony has produced all the conviction of which it is capable, are removed by an intuitive perception of the divinity of the Gospel. External evidence alone can never completely satisfy the mind; but the inherent character of Christianity shows the ingenuous inquirer, that it is the word of God.

Mr. Buckminster proceeds to illustrate the superiority of the evidence of a divine interposition, taken from the character of Christ, over that derived from the record of miracles. "There is something in the character of Christ, which, to an attentive reader of his history, is of more force than ALL THE WEIGHT OF EXTERNAL evidence to prove him DIVINE." * After a masterly portraiture of the character of the Redeemer, showing the fulness of Divinity with which it was pervaded, proving that Christ himself was the great moral miracle, far transcending the outward works which he performed, the Discourse concludes with an express recognition of the power in human nature, to discover the manifestations of God, in the presence of moral sublimity and love-

* BUCKMINSTER'S *Sermons*, (3d Ed.) p. 19.

liness. "Have you caught, my hearers," exclaims this eloquent advocate of Christian truth, "have you caught any glimpses of Jesus? If you believe in him as he was, if you love what you know of him, and imitate what you love, and study to know more and more of his character, you will see that he was in the Father and the Father in him; for the more like God, the perfection of all excellence, you become, the more will you feel all that is godlike in his Son." *

I should look in vain for more appropriate or forcible language than this, to express the doctrine which I deem of such vital importance to the true apprehension of Christianity.

Of a similar faith, as well as of a kindred spirit, with Mr. Buckminster, was his friend and biographer, whose name holds a conspicuous rank in the annals of the New-England clergy. And there have been few, indeed, among the scholars, whose memory is cherished by their native land, who united such clearness of intellect, such unerring good sense, such instinctive delicacy of taste, such aversion to whatever is extravagant in opinion or conduct, with such genuine modesty and sweetness of character, as the late Mr. Thacher. Though personally unknown to me, I cannot remember

* BUCKMINSTER'S *Sermons*, (3d Ed.) p. 33.

the time when I did not regard him as a being of superior dignity and holiness; the reputation of his mild virtues are associated with my first perception of the moral power of Christianity; the tidings of his decease in a foreign clime threw a gloom over my boyish pleasures; the memory of that hour comes over the long interval of years in connexion with other venerated forms now no more; and shall I ask to be forgiven for this spontaneous tribute to one, whose opinions were at the foundation of his character, whose character is the best commentary on his opinions? I might refer to his whole Sermon on the "Originality of the Christian System," as an illustration of the grounds on which he was accustomed to teach the divine origin of the Gospel; but I will only quote one or two brief passages, which suffice for the purpose that I have in view. "The originality of the doctrines of Christ was such, that he could not have learned them from any human source. This illustrates the divinity of its claims."* The preacher then unfolds his subject, by showing that the idea of a universal religion, the perfect system of human duty, and the originality of the Savior's character, present such conclusive proofs of the divinity of his mission, *independent*

* THACHER'S *Sermons*, p. 132.

of other evidence, that it is next to impossible not to believe, “that the God of benevolence in mercy to his children sent his Son on the earth to realize such a character, and to teach us by his perfect example, how we should live, how we should suffer, and a still harder lesson, how we should die.” *

The same doctrine is maintained by the late Dr. Parker, whose singular devotion to the practical duties of the ministry did not destroy his interest in theological inquiry, nor lead him to neglect the nicer discriminations of truth and the evidence on which it rests. “When we look at the teachings of Jesus,” he says, “it would seem as if he had conversed with the spirits of light, and were bringing down to earth their radiant conceptions of truth; as if he had indeed been in the bosom of the Father, and were commissioned to bring to men his counsels; as if *he needed no other testimony than the very lessons which he taught*, to the truth of his own declaration, ‘My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.’” † “Even MIRACLES, though they might convince the mind, yet could hardly have reached the character with a transforming power, independently of the NATURE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS dispensed. These were

* THACHER'S *Sermons*, pp. 141, 142. † PARKER'S *Sermons*, p. 171.

such as find an advocate in every unperverted mind, and every uncorrupted heart. They come with divine power to the conscience. They are adapted to the actual wants of man's spiritual nature. Herein lies their divine efficacy. They suit the necessities alike of the child, and of the philosopher." * "They have been found adapted to the condition and wants of the most cultivated minds; and let the human race go on for a hundred centuries in improvement, yet Christianity will be still in advance of them, still the pioneer of their onward progress. This is a wonderful fact, considering the circumstances under which our religion was promulgated, and *attests with power the divine authority* of its founder, and his adaptation to his great and godlike work." †

Such were the views of a man, who certainly could not be accused of indifference to the moral wants of the community; whose practical good sense enabled him to judge what kind of evidence was best suited to make a deep impression on the majority of minds; and prevented him from being imposed on by the semblance of truth, instead of its reality; he saw that there was other testimony to the Gospel beside the works of Jesus; he was

* PARKER'S *Sermons*, p. 174.

† *Ibid.* p. 175.

alive to the proofs of its divinity from its effects on the human soul; for his experience was large; and he was compelled to trace the influence he had witnessed to a heavenly source.

I come now to the evidence, that the doctrine of your Discourse is contradictory to the opinions of those living writers, who have contributed in no small degree to the establishment and support of a liberal theology in our churches. But while I bring forward their testimony in opposition to your exclusive doctrine, let me not be understood to pretend to their countenance in any real or supposed errors of my own. I would not claim the support even of those I so much esteem for any opinions which are looked on with suspicion. They may agree with me in the rejection of your theory of the Christian evidence, while they agree in nothing else. I refer to the public expression of their views, merely to show that they do not regard the evidence of miracles, as the only proof of the divine origin of Christianity.

“The internal evidences of Christianity,” says a writer in the “Christian Examiner,” “is a subject, which is every day growing in importance and interest. Without going into the inquiry how far the alleged miracles of Christianity are fitted to keep alive a veneration for it in future ages, we feel no hesitation in saying, that the time has come

when the attention is to be more and more directed to the indication of its origin borne on its features, — to the cast of its doctrines and morality, — to its tendency, spirit, and object. These are evidences, of the force of which all feel capable of judging. They are more within our reach, fall more immediately under our observation, than some other species of evidence. They are not of a perishable character, not temporary and fading. They multiply and strengthen with age. They have a sort of universal presence. They are felt wherever Christianity is received. The evidence from miracles, however satisfactory, is by its nature more local and confined. It overpowers the understandings of spectators, but time takes something from its freshness and strength. For ourselves, we are disposed to rely much on the marks of a heavenly origin, that Christianity bears on the face of it. We think, that we may appeal with confidence to its internal evidences. They form one of our strong holds, which we do not fear ever being compelled to surrender. Should it be abandoned, Christianity would be in great danger of falling.” *

“ Christianity,” says another writer in the same

* *Christian Examiner*, vol. iii. p. 141. Art. on Jenyns’ Internal Evidence, by ALVAN LAMSON.

Journal, "embodies a collection of moral and vital truths, and THESE TRUTHS, apart from ALL HISTORY or philosophy, constitute Christianity itself. Instead, therefore, of perplexing and confounding the young with what are called the evidences of Christianity, give them Christianity itself. Begin by giving them Christianity itself, as exhibited in the life and character of the Lord Jesus, as illustrated by his simple, beautiful, and touching parables, and as it breathes through all his discourses. They will FEEL IT TO BE TRUE. Depend upon it, paradoxical as it may sound, children will be much more likely to believe Christianity without what are called the evidences, than with them; and the remark applies to some who are not children. Why talk to one about the argument from prophecy, or the argument from miracles, when these are the very points and the only points on which his mind, from some peculiarity in its original constitution, or from limited information, chiefly labors. Give him Christianity itself, by which we mean the body of moral and vital truths which constitutes Christianity. Observe it when you will, you will find that the doubts and difficulties, suggested by children, relate almost exclusively to the HISTORY of Christianity, or to what are called the EXTERNAL evidences of Christianity, and not to the TRUTH of

Christianity itself. Give them Christianity itself; for if they believe in that, it is enough. Nothing can be more injudicious than to persist in urging the argument from miracles on a mind, that from any cause has thus become indifferent, and perhaps impatient of it. How idle to think to convince a person of Christianity by miracles, when it is these very miracles, and not Christianity, that he doubts. The instances, we suspect, are not rare, even of adults, who are *first converted to Christianity itself*, and afterwards, through the moral and spiritual change which Christianity induces, are brought to believe entirely and devoutly in its *miraculous origin and history*.”*

“There is another evidence of Christianity,” says Dr. Channing, “still more INTERNAL than any on which I have yet dwelt, an evidence to be FELT rather than described, but not less REAL, because founded on feeling. I refer to that conviction of the divine original of our religion, which springs up and continually gains strength in those who apply it habitually to their tempers and lives, and who imbibe its spirit and hopes. In such men, there is a consciousness of the adaptation of Christianity to their noblest faculties; a con-

* *Christian Examiner*, vol xiv. pp. 192, 193, 197. Art. on M’Ilvaine’s Evidences, by JAMES WALKER.

sciousness of its exalting and consoling influences, of its power to confer the true happiness of human nature, to give that peace, which the world cannot give; which assures them that it is not of earthly origin, but a ray from the Everlasting Light, a stream from the fountain of Heavenly Wisdom and Love. This is the evidence which sustains the faith of thousands, who never read and cannot understand the learned books of Christian apologists, who want perhaps words to explain the ground of their belief, but whose faith is of adamantine firmness, who hold the Gospel with a conviction more intimate and unwavering than mere arguments ever produced.” *

The last testimony I shall present against the doctrine, that miracles are the only evidence of a divine revelation, that the external evidence is every thing and the internal evidence nothing, is from the Reviewer of Verplanck’s “Internal Evidences” in the “Christian Examiner.”

“It seems to be part of the economy of Providence in relation to Christianity, that there should be some kind of evidence or other adapted to the character of every mind. While one rests satisfied with the HISTORICAL, and internal critical evidence, and thinks himself an incompetent judge

* CHANNING’S *Discourse at the Dudleian Lecture*, p. 34.

of the MORAL INTERNAL evidence, another recurs to the latter, as the ‘grander, broader, and more powerful.’ We rejoice in the power and the concurrence of BOTH to establish the same truth. *The adaptation of Christianity to the nature of man*, and its conformity with what we know of the character of God, is unquestionably, to him who will reflect upon it, a very powerful evidence of its DIVINE ORIGIN.” *

This article I have always heard ascribed to your own pen; and if this be correct, it only shows that in some instances, a change of opinion may not be a “crime;” and that even wise and good “men throw out their opinions rashly, reserving to themselves the liberty of correcting them, if they are wrong. If you would know for what doctrines they hold themselves responsible, you must look to their last publication.” †

The doctrine of your Discourse is still more forcibly contradicted in the following passage from a work which bears your name. “The wisdom and the self-restraint, for so it is to be considered, of our Savior, in confining his teaching to the essential truths of religion, and the broad distinction which he thus made between

* *Christian Examiner*, vol. ii. pp. 131, 132.

† *Discourse*, Note ii. p. 61.

these and all other doctrines, appear to me among the most striking proofs of the divinity of his mission. I cannot believe that a merely human teacher would have conducted himself with such perfect wisdom ; — that he would have succeeded in communicating to his disciples those principles, which are the foundation of all religion and morality, without perplexing their minds by the discussion of any topics less important ; and at last, have left his doctrine a monument for all future time.” *

You will not imagine, I trust, that this array of authorities, which might be increased to an indefinite extent, is brought forward as a refutation of the doctrine of your Discourse. Its truth or falsehood is not to be determined by an appeal to distinguished names. It must stand or fall according to its own intrinsic character ; and if you can establish it by probable arguments, in a regular course of reasoning, I shall not hesitate to admit it, although contrary to the opinion of so many eminent theologians. No sincere inquirer after truth will reject an idea, which has substantial evidence in its favor, from the simple fact that it is new. Every important discovery in

* NORTON'S *Statement of Reasons*, p. 327.

morals and science, for a long time, has to bear the reproach of novelty. If that were the only objection to your theory, I should certainly think it idle to call it in question.

But, when you describe the doctrine opposed to your own, as “the latest form of infidelity”; when you charge those who rest their belief in Christianity on its internal evidence, with denying their Master; when you more than intimate that all, who do not accept the views which you propose, are incapable of sound thinking and unworthy to bear the office of Christian teachers; it becomes important to show that the accusation which you bring recoils upon yourself; that you have been guilty of rashness and injustice in stigmatizing an opinion as a dangerous innovation, which has been held by the purest lights of the Church, in ancient and modern times.

II. I proceed now to consider your doctrine, that miracles are the only evidence of a divine revelation, in another point of view.

It is contrary to the clear and express teachings of the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament. Whatever importance they attach to the evidence of miracles, in support of the claims of divine messengers, — and that is an interesting topic of theological inquiry, — they give

no sanction to your doctrine, that miracles are the sole and exclusive proof of the interposition of God. They appeal to many other considerations; they advance the principle, that the Almighty has spoken to his children in "divers manners," as well as at "sundry times"; now in the cool of the day, among the trees of the garden, and now in the glow of the burning bush; now in the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on man, and now in the smoke and storm of the flaming mount; now in the audible voice which made the flesh to quake, and now in the obscure monition which sent a thrill through the heart. The prophet is watching for the manifestation of Jehovah, but he is taught that the Holy One is not limited in his access to his creatures. A great and strong wind rends the mountains, and divides the rocks; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still, small voice; and the prophet hides his face and stands before the Lord. The Pharisees also desired of Jesus a sign from Heaven; they could not see his Divinity in his deeds of beneficence and might, in the inspiration that breathed over his soul, and dwelt upon his lips, in the celestial wisdom with which he

uttered the holiest truths, or in the moral perfection which proved him to be the beloved Son of God ; they demanded some signal and overwhelming displays of miraculous power, they insisted that the credentials of the Messiah should be written on the sky, they were blind to the most convincing proofs, when not in accordance with their previous conceptions ; but Jesus does not recognise the justice of their claim ; an evil and an adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; when he had already told them, that he who doeth the will of his Father shall know of the doctrine, whether it were from God, or whether he spake of himself.

These general considerations are established by a more particular examination of the testimony of Scripture. We shall find, in the course of our inquiry, that the messengers of God never appeal to an exclusive kind of evidence in support of their mission ; least of all, to that which you pronounce to be the only infallible criterion.

1. In the first place, the Scriptures present examples of divine messengers, who performed no miracles, as the seal of their authority. They appear in the name of the Lord ; they speak as his vicegerents ; they profess to bear a revelation of truth from Heaven to men ; they claim to be heard not on their own account, but on account

of the divine commission with which they were charged ; they are received, in that character, by the people to whom they are sent ; subsequent teachers bear witness to their claims ; Christ himself refers to them as the messengers of God ; their names have been held sacred in every age of the Church ; and the denial of their mission has always been reckoned the confession of infidelity.

Now if the doctrine of your Discourse, that miracles are the only credentials of a divine messenger, be correct, it follows that the prophets, to whom I allude, pretended to the authority of God without any foundation for their claims. They spoke, when they were not commanded ; they ran, when they were not sent ; they declared their own imaginations, as the oracles of God ; for the only seal of their commission was wanting ; they wrought no miracles, and yet professed to be divine messengers.

Is it necessary to bring specific instances, with which the Bible abounds, in support of my argument ? I begin with Samuel. The Lord called him when a child. He spoke to him in visions of the night. The soul of the youthful Hebrew was visited with the spirit from on high. He was established to be the prophet of the Lord. A revelation of divine truth was made to him in

Shiloh.* His whole life was passed in direct communications with God, and in announcing the divine messages to the people. No stronger language is used in the Bible concerning the divine mission of any one, than of this prophet. Yet he performed no miracle in proof of his claims. He gave no outward sign of his authority. The assurance of his inspiration was in the truth which he announced.

Will you admit that Samuel was a divine messenger? Then you abandon the ground you have taken, and acknowledge that there is evidence of a divine commission other than miracle. Do you deny that Samuel was a divine messenger? Then you contradict the express assertion of the Bible, the universal opinion of the Church, and expose yourself to an accusation, which I trust you do not deserve, and which I will not bring.

I next refer to the prophet Jeremiah. He was consecrated from his birth to be the messenger of God; the Lord ordained him a prophet to the nations; he was anointed with the Holy Spirit, so that his soul was filled with a higher strength than his own; the timidity of childhood was overcome; and while the dew of his youth was fresh upon him, he became as an iron pillar and a brazen

* 1 Sam. iii. 4-10, 15, 20, 21.

wall, against the kings, and the princes, and the priests of the land.* He was so fully conscious of acting under a divine commission, that he not only announced his message with the authority of God, but detected the false pretensions of those who claimed a similar commission, without being divinely sent. He was able to separate between the chaff and the wheat, between the dreams of the fancy and the words of Jehovah ; but he made use of no outward criterion ; he presented none himself ; he judged the false prophets by the inherent character of their message ; he rested his own authority on the same evidence ; he wrought no miracle, yet he declared the word of God ; and the proof of its divinity was in its effects ; the fire which melted the obdurate spirit, the hammer which brake in pieces the rocky heart, were no invention of man, but the work of God.†

I need not go through the “goodly fellowship of the prophets” for further examples of the fact, that divine messengers were sent, whose mission was not confirmed by the testimony of miracles. Your doctrine would disperse that glorious company, dim the light that crowned their heads, rob their word of the divinity which it claimed, steal away the inspiration which rested on their souls,

* Jer. i. 5, 7, 18.

† Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.

and reduce them from the sublime distinction of prophets of Jehovah to the level of Jewish enthusiasts.

I will close this part of the discussion with the example of John the Baptist, the forerunner and friend of the Messiah. He was declared by the highest authority to be a prophet, whom no one born of woman could surpass.* Yet John wrought no miracle.† What is your view of the mission of John? Was it from Heaven, or of men? If you say, from Heaven, you take back your doctrine. If you say, of men, you oppose the declaration of Christ.

2. In the second place, the Scriptures present examples of divine messengers, who, although they performed miracles, did not appeal to them as the sole evidence of their mission. If they sometimes referred to their miracles as proofs that they were commissioned from Heaven, it is far from being the case, that they never referred to any thing else. An examination of the mode in which they presented their claims to divine authority will show you that your exclusive ground cannot be maintained.

We need only consider some passages in the history of our Savior himself.

* Luke vii. 28.

† John x. 41.

When John the Baptist sent from the prison to inquire of Jesus, whether he were indeed the Messiah, or whether the coming of another were still to be expected, Jesus, in the first place, directs the attention of the messengers to the works which he performed. They were the acknowledged credentials of the Messiah. But this was not all. He does not confine himself to the mention of the miracles. He does not speak of them in a way which would lead one to suppose that he regarded them as the exclusive testimony to his mission. He connects them with another fact, not miraculous in its character, to which, for aught that appears in the narrative, he attaches equal importance, as to the miracles themselves. While he bids the disciples declare to John, that "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised up," he adds, "and the poor have the gospel preached to them." * This latter circumstance was the fulfilment of prophecy; the Gospel, the doctrine of truth, of holiness, and love, was now proclaimed; it was announced to the poor; the great idea of human brotherhood received a practical illustration; and this fact, no less than the miraculous display of power, was declared to John as a proof that the Messiah had come.

* Matt. xi. 2-7.

On another memorable occasion, — and one which brings the character of Jesus and the nature of his doctrine into a strong light, — our Savior enjoins the importance of a spiritual faith on those who had just witnessed an external miracle of a very impressive kind. They had eaten of the loaves which he had multiplied by his miraculous power ; but the wonder failed to produce any religious effect on their minds ; they came to Christ with views of a grossly selfish and material character ; and upon his speaking to them of the duty of belief in him as the messenger of God, they immediately asked for an outward sign, as a foundation of their faith ; they wished to see something still more extraordinary than what they had yet witnessed ; Moses had fed their fathers with manna in the desert ; and they demanded a similar or a greater miracle. Jesus gave no countenance to these vain wishes. He virtually tells them, that his character and doctrine bear their own evidence with them ; that they need no outward signs in confirmation of their divinity ; that the true bread of God is that which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life to the world, in his person. He expresses his surprise, that though they have seen him, they do not believe ; intimating that they are without excuse, that they have plenary evidence in the character of his doctrine of its divine origin, and

that all who were “drawn of the Father,” who possessed a spirit kindred with his own, would recognise the truth which he taught, and receive spiritual life from its influence.* It appears that this was a hard saying to not a few ; it gave great offence ; many of his disciples from that time walked with him no more ; † the materialists of Galilee must needs have the visible manna from the sky ; to them “there was no intuition, no direct perception, of the truth of Christianity.” ‡

Once more, we find the same doctrine announced in the sublime conversation between our Savior and Pilate, previous to his crucifixion. “Art thou a king then ?” asks the Roman Governor. “Jesus answered, Thou sayest truth ; for I am a king. To this end was I born ; and for this cause did I come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” Now if the mind of Jesus had ever admitted the idea, that miraculous evidence was essential to the confirmation of truth ; that nothing but external signs could attest his Divinity ; it is plain that he could not have uttered the declaration, which follows, “Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.” § Is there not here an express recognition of the power of the soul to perceive spiritual truth ? Is

* John vi. 25 - 59.

† John vi. 66.

‡ *Discourse*, p. 32.

§ John xviii. 37.

there not a faculty in the spirit of man, when true to its birth of the Spirit of God, to commune with the Infinite Mind, to behold the Divinity in the manifestations of truth? Hath not man an ear to hear the voice of the Son of God? And without reference to this primary fact in human nature, what rational construction can be put on such language, so often uttered by Christ?

It is unnecessary to multiply examples, in which Jesus refers to the testimony of the soul, with no less confidence than to the evidence of miracles. The distinctness, the power, the earnest conviction with which he does this, in the midst of a sensual and idolatrous age, the calm and clear insight into the invisible nature of man, which he ever displayed, the anticipation of spiritual truth as the common patrimony of the race, which he cherished when all experience was against him, but which subsequent experience tends to confirm, are, I own, to my mind, among the strongest proofs of his divine mission. They seem to me to reveal the peculiar presence of God in the Spirit of Christ. They are signs of a divine inspiration more forcible to me, than a visible sign from Heaven.

I will conclude the discussion of this topic with a brief reference to the manner in which the Apostle Paul presents the evidence of the

religion, of which he was so powerful an advocate. He did not limit himself to the proof from miracles. He allowed every important consideration in favor of Christianity its due place. Now he spoke of the resurrection of Christ; now of the fulfilment of prophecy; now of the external signs which had been wrought by him; and now of the intrinsic divinity of the Gospel itself. While the Jews demanded a new miracle; while the Greeks sought after wisdom; while the sages of the schools, and the disputers of the world, saw nothing but foolishness in the doctrine of Christ; Paul persisted in preaching it; he knew that it was filled with a divine life; and that they who were called to its enjoyment, they whose souls were in unison with its spirit, would intuitively perceive that it was the wisdom of God, and the power of God.*

Still further, Paul declares in the account of his ministry, which he gives to the Corinthians, that he relied for success on the sincerity of his purpose, and on the clearness and energy with which he proclaimed Christianity as the revelation of God. He has renounced, as he tells them, the hidden things of dishonesty; he exhibits the word of God without craft or deceit; and appeals to the con-

* 1 Cor. i. 20 - 24.

science by the manifestation of truth. There could hardly be a more distinct statement of the principle, that moral truth is addressed to the moral nature of man, and finds its strongest support in the testimony of the soul. It was the opinion of Paul, that beside the miraculous displays of power, which he had witnessed and of which he had been the subject, there was another evidence of the divinity of the Gospel; for it commended itself to the human consciousness; it was in accordance with the divine law written upon the heart; and none but they who were lost to their better nature, could fail to perceive in it the revelation of God.*

The Apostle continues to speak of the light which had been granted, enabling him to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.† His meaning cannot be better illustrated, than by the following admirable remarks from the most profound theologian, whom this country has produced. “If a sight of Christ’s outward glory might give a rational assurance of his divinity, why may not an apprehension of his spiritual glory do so too? Doubtless Christ’s spiritual glory is in itself as distinguishing, and as plainly showing his divinity, as his outward glory, and a great deal more. For

* 2 Cor. iv. 1 - 4.

† 2 Cor. iv. 6.

his spiritual glory is that wherein his divinity consists; and the outward glory of his transfiguration showed him to be divine, only as it was a remarkable image or representation of that spiritual glory. Doubtless, therefore, he that has had a clear sight of the spiritual glory of Christ may say, 'I have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have been an eye witness of his majesty,' upon as good grounds as the Apostle, when he had respect to the outward glory of Christ that he had seen. A true sense of the divine excellency of the things of God's word doth more directly and immediately convince of the truth of them; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them that is so divine and Godlike, that is greatly and evidently distinguishing of them from things merely human, or that men are the inventors and authors of; a glory, that is so high and great, that when clearly seen, commands assent to their divinity and reality. The evidence, which they who are spiritually enlightened have of the truth of the things of religion, is a kind of intuition and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see divinity in them. That is, they see a divine and transcendent and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory, as, if clearly seen,

does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.” *

III. In the third place, we find express passages in the Scriptures, which prove that miracles are not the only evidence of divine revelation. The instances, which we have already considered, are sufficient to authorize the conclusion, that the exclusive doctrine of your Discourse is in opposition to the Bible ; but I am unwilling to dismiss this branch of the subject, without a more immediate reference to certain scriptural declarations, which imply the necessity of various kinds of evidence, as proof of a divine commission.

In the instructions of Moses, of the Prophets, of the Apostles, of Christ himself, we often meet with allusions to the danger of deception, of receiving a mere pretender to divine authority, as the messenger of God. We are told that false prophets will appear ; that they will advance such plausible claims as will impose on the unwary ; that they will work miracles in support of their mission, similar in outward appearance to those which are truly divine ; and accordingly there must be some standard other than that of miracles, by which to judge of the truth of their pretensions. If miracles be the SOLE evidence of a

* EDWARDS' *Works*, vol. viii. pp. 300, 305, 306.

divine commission, and if apparent miracles be performed, it is impossible to preserve any logical strictness, and to avoid the conclusion that the miracle-worker is from God. Is it said that these miracles are false, while those of the divine messenger are true? But how do we know that? In external appearance, a false miracle is the same as a true one; both are extraordinary changes in the physical world; they differ only in their hidden causality; and that is a matter of inference; we ascribe the one to divine power, and the other to human art, because we have some grounds, beside the extraordinary character of the event, for believing the interposition of God, in the one case, while, in the other, we have no such grounds. It follows, accordingly, from the declarations of the Bible, that, if there be no evidence of a divine mission but miracles, even the evidence of miracles itself is destroyed. I will briefly consider a few passages which relate to this point.

Among the counsels, which the Hebrew Lawgiver imparts to his people, he takes occasion to speak of the case of a pretended prophet. Many such cases would probably occur. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, [performs a visible miracle,] and the sign or the wonder come to pass, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that

prophet or that dreamer of dreams; if he say, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God.” *

The principle involved in these directions is so evident, that it can scarcely escape the notice of the most inattentive reader. A prophet is supposed to make his appearance among the people of the land; he claims a divine commission from his god, though not from Jehovah; he works a miracle in proof of his claims; he gives a sign, and the sign comes to pass; but yet he is to be rejected, and put to death. His apparent miracle is to be judged by a higher standard; it is to be brought to the test of the doctrine advanced; that decides it to be false, though it had every external proof in its favor; and to reverse the case, and apply the principle here stated to the evidences of Christianity, it is the divinity of the Christian doctrine, which substantiates the divinity of the Christian miracles.

Again, Jesus declares in the most solemn manner, that the power of working miracles was so far from being the only evidence of a divine com-

* Deut. xiii. 1 - 5.

mission, that it was not even a proof of a good character. A man, he asserts, may perform miracles in his name, may utter prophecies, may cast out devils, and, at the same time, be a worthless man, and rejected, at the day of judgment, from the kingdom of Heaven.* Now if miracles alone cannot substantiate a claim to the favor of God, and a good moral character, it is clear that miracles alone cannot form the credentials of a divine messenger; for the supposition that the Deity would commission a bad man to make a revelation of his will is blasphemy. Our Savior himself presents the criterion. When he warns his hearers "to beware of false prophets," he immediately adds, "ye shall know them by their fruits."† Just as you see that a cluster of grapes on the vine is not a bunch of thistles, you can perceive the presence of the Divinity in the moral glory of the divine messenger.

Again, in the description of the dangers to which his disciples would be exposed in the perilous times that were to succeed his death, Jesus predicts, "that there shall arise false Christs and false prophets," with such specious pretensions, "that if it were possible they would deceive the very elect."‡ Now in what manner was the fal-

* Matt. vii. 21 - 23.

† Matt. vii. 15 - 20.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 24.

lacy of their pretensions to be detected? Not by bringing them to the test of miracles. For these they were able to perform, as far as the external appearance was concerned. "They would show great signs and wonders." These would deceive many; for every extraordinary event was thought to indicate a peculiar manifestation of God. But the elect would not be deluded by their pretensions. They who had understood the mind of Christ, who had received the essential spirit of his instructions, would look for a deeper meaning in every alleged divine commission, than was signified by outward wonders; they would make the character of the revelation the test of its truth; and finding no inward signs of divinity, would reject its claims.

Again, the same principle is expressed in the direction of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, in regard to their treatment of those who were thought to pervert the doctrine of Christ. "For though an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel to you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." * According to the doctrine of your Discourse, the preaching of an angel would be a signal proof of a divine revelation. It would be a conspicuous miracle, of which no

* Galatians i. 8.

one could stand in doubt. What need, you would say, of further evidence? Not so Paul. He expressly commands the disciples to receive nothing on the authority of an angel, unless it was approved by a higher standard. A miracle alone in his view was not sufficient; the character of the doctrine must determine the weight of the miracle; the internal evidence of divinity must be added to the external testimony of miracle, or even the latter would lose its force.

In like manner, Paul alludes to the coming of a "wicked one," who should exhibit "all power, and signs, and lying wonders";* who would deceive many; but because they cherished no "love of the truth," no taste for its revelation as made by the messengers of God. A pure love of truth, "a sense of divine things," would lead its possessor to reject the falsehood, notwithstanding the apparent miracles with which it was propped up. According to Paul, a certain criterion of truth is to be found in the intrinsic character of the doctrine; according to your Discourse, this criterion is of no value whatever; for "there can be no intuition, no direct perception of the truth of Christianity."†

* 1 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

† *Discourse*, p. 32.

I have thus shown, as I trust, that the position which you assume is at variance with the general belief of the Christian Church, and with the express testimony of the Scriptures. I might now proceed to point out the philosophical objections which it labors under, and which adapt it rather to increase the difficulties of unbelievers, than to diminish any form of infidelity. But these have been recently stated in such an able manner, that I need not pursue the subject in this place.*

There are several objections, however, of a practical character that apply to the doctrine of your Discourse, and the connexion in which it is presented, which I cannot pass over without notice.

I. The doctrine, that miracles are the only evidence of a divine revelation, if generally admitted, would impair the religious influence of the Christian ministry. It would separate the pastor of a church from the sympathies of his people, confine him in a sphere of thought remote from their usual interests, and give an abstract and scholastic character to his services in the pulpit. The great object of his endeavors would be to demonstrate the truth of the Christian history; the

* See *Boston Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1839.

weapons of his warfare would be carnal, and not spiritual; drawn from grammars, and lexicons, and mouldy traditions, not from the treasures of the human heart. The miracles being established to the satisfaction of an inquisitive generation, nothing would remain but to announce the truth on their authority; for as all other evidence is without value, and this alone sufficient, it would be a waste of time to direct the attention to the divine glory of Christ and his revelation; this is beyond the reach of human "perception"; none but enthusiasts can make use of it. The minister would rely for success on his skill in argument, rather than on his sympathy with man; on the knowledge he gains within the walls of the University, rather than on the experience which may be learned in the homes of his people. He would trust more to his logical demonstration of the evidences of Christianity, than to the faithful exhibition of Christian truth to the naked human heart. But, I believe, not a wise and experienced pastor can be found, who will not say that, as a general rule, the discussion of the historical evidence is ill adapted to the pulpit, and that the effects of such preaching on society at large, or on the individual conscience, are too minute to be estimated.

It is not surprising, however, that with only a theoretical acquaintance with the duties of the pastor, an undue stress should be laid on the practical value of arguments derived from historical learning. We bring this prejudice with us from the schools. We suppose that what was effectual in the exercises of the class, will be equally effectual in the instructions of the church. We imagine that the busy men and women of our congregations, "careful and troubled about many things," will be deeply interested in questions that deeply interest ourselves. Thus, it is well if we do not spend many years in proving that the Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear, while we have no insight into the divine truth which beams from their pages, and which needs only to be sincerely set forth, to find access to the soul of man, and, by the might of the Holy Ghost, from which it came, to purify and regenerate society. In this way, to a considerable extent, we almost unconsciously pursue the course which you recommend, of presenting miracles as the sole evidence of Christianity. But, I cannot say, that my experience or observation at all confirms your ideas. I am not aware, that bad men have been made good, or good men better, to so great a degree, by the method which you advise, as to encourage a repetition of the experiment.

On the contrary, I have known great and beneficial effects to arise from the simple exhibition of the truth of the Gospel to the heart and conscience, by earnest men, who trusted to the intuitive power of the soul, for the perception of its divinity. The revelation of Christ is addressed to the better nature of man ; “ my sheep,” said he, “ hear my voice, and follow me, and I give unto them eternal life ” ; “ the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not,” but the “ children of light ” look upward and are blest ; it meets with a cordial reception from those who are burdened with the consciousness of sin, who are seeking for higher things, who are “ feeling after God, if haply they may find him ” ; and this fact is the foundation of the minister’s success. If you confine him to the demonstration of the miracles ; if you deny him intimate access to the soul, by the truth which he bears ; if you virtually tell him that the internal evidence of Christianity is a delusion, that our personal experience of its power is no proof of its divinity, and that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God is to be believed only because learned men vouchsafe to assure the humble Christian of its truth ; you deprive the minister of all inward force ; you make him little better than a logical machine ; and much as I value a sound logic in its proper

place, I am sure it is not the instrument which is mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin. It may detect error ; but it cannot give so much as a glimpse of the glory of Christ. It may refute fallacies ; but it cannot bind the heart to the love of holiness. A higher power is necessary for this purpose ; and such a power God has granted to man in the divine gift of Christianity, which corresponds to his inmost wants, and bears the pledge of its truth in its effects on the soul.

II. I object again to your exclusive principle, on account of its injurious bearing on the character of a large portion of the most sincere believers in Christ. We have already seen, that, pressed to its logical consequences, it denies the Christian name to all who do not receive Christianity in the method which you prescribe. For it is clear, that if Christianity be founded *ONLY* on its historical evidence, he, who does not receive it on that evidence, cannot strictly be said to receive it at all. But I will not believe that you intend to enforce this conclusion on the great mass of Christians who differ from you, — for whose dullness and ignorance you may find some excuse, — although you do not hesitate to apply it to those whose studies and profession ought to have furnished them with better information.

Still it is not a "sweet and pleasant thing,"* for an unlearned believer in Christ to be told that he is building on an imperfect foundation, and that the temple of his faith is but "wood, hay, and stubble," though he "may be saved, yet so as by fire." For, at all events, it calls in question either his honesty or his judgment. It implies that he either knows the foundation is bad,

* "Surely it is a sweet and pleasant thing to tell and to hear together of the great things which God has done for our souls," observes the Reverend Fielding Ould of Liverpool, when he invites the liberal Christians of that city to come to his church, and hear themselves proved to be infidels.

The answer of the ministers, whose congregations he thus appealed to, is equally manly, and applicable to those similarly circumstanced, on both sides of the water. "When good men differ from each other, it is 'sweet and pleasant,' to reason together, and prove all things, and whatsoever things are pure, and true, and lovely, to think on these things, provided that both parties are conscious of their liability to error, and are anxious to learn as well as to teach; that each confides in the integrity, ingenuousness, and ability of the other; that each applies himself with reasons to the understanding, not with terrors to the will. But such conference is not 'sweet and pleasant,' where, fallibility being confessed on one side, infallibility is assumed on the other; where one has nothing to learn and every thing to teach; where the arguments of an equal are propounded as a message of inspiration."

For an interesting account of the controversy thus stated, see the "Christian Examiner," for September, 1839. The great principles, which are so ably set forth in the pamphlets already come to hand, are welcomed by many hearts here. They must be cheering to the friends of mental freedom everywhere.

and is therefore insincere ; or he does not know it, and is therefore imposed upon. His integrity can be preserved only at the expense of his insight. He may be deluded ; if not, he is a hypocrite. Either supposition is any thing but agreeable. I should not like to use such language to a man for whose soul it was my duty to watch.

I know not a few individuals, — neither very wise, nor very unwise, compared with the average of men, — certainly not persons qualified by the “knowledge of which extensive learning commonly makes a part,” to express an opinion on the subject, who still venture, with a modest confidence, to assume the name of Christians. They inform me that they obtain no satisfaction from such works as Paley’s “Evidences of Christianity,” or Lardner’s “Credibility of the Gospel History.” Books of this character do not speak to their condition ; their minds are so constructed as to be little affected by such reasonings ; but yet the truth of Christianity commends itself to their souls ; and they believe in Christ, because they behold his glory. They do not even question the divine origin of Christianity ; they would as soon think of asking whether the sun shines at noon ; and cheerful and contented in their faith, they leave the problems, which require curious historical research, to scholars, whose business it is to deal with them.

I have known many persons of this description ; indeed, if I am not greatly deceived, they are to be found in all our congregations ; I have witnessed their unobtrusive piety in the daily walks of life ; I have visited them in scenes of deepest sorrow ; I have stood at the side of their death-beds ; and I could no more doubt their genuine Christian faith, because it was not the product of historical evidence, than I could deny the skill of one of our native artists, because it did not grow up from the study of classic models.

This experience is confirmed by the testimony of an eminent man, already quoted, who, whatever portion of truth he might have failed to perceive, it would be extreme folly to doubt, was conversant with the workings of the soul, in the affairs of religion, as few have ever been, in our country, or in any other. “ If the evidence of the Gospel depended only on history, and such reasonings as learned men only are capable of, it would be above the reach of far the greatest part of mankind. But persons with but an ordinary degree of knowledge are capable, without a long and subtile train of reasoning, to see the divine excellency of the things of religion. They are capable of being taught by the Spirit of God, as well as learned men. The evidence, that is this way obtained, is vastly better and more satisfy-

ing, than all that can be obtained by the arguings of those that are the most learned, and the greatest masters of reason. And babes are as capable of knowing these things, as the wise and prudent; and they are often hid from these when they are revealed to those.” *

III. The preceding views suggest another fatal objection to the doctrine of your Discourse. It removes Christianity from its strong hold in the common mind, and puts it into the keeping of scholars and antiquaries. I have already hinted at this objection, but it deserves a more particular consideration. It follows, as the necessary consequence of your exclusive hypothesis. For if the truth of Christianity rests entirely on the foundation of historical evidence; if there be nothing in its intrinsic character to commend it to the soul, as the revelation of God; if the uneducated inquirer must make up his mind, either from his own investigations or from the testimony of others, in regard to the subtlest questions of literary criticism, before he can cherish a vital faith in the doctrines of Christ, of course, he resigns his opinions to the guidance of the learned. He must give up his birth-right as a man, before he can establish his faith as a Christian. For he cannot

* EDWARDS' *Works*, vol. viii. p. 310.

enter into such investigations himself; he has neither the ability, the leisure, nor the apparatus, that is requisite; he must sue at the feet of the scholar for the light which he needs for the salvation of the soul. The "grace and truth" revealed by the Savior become "as the words of a book that is sealed; the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for I am not learned." The dark hour of God's displeasure has come back; we hear the prophetic denunciation repeated; "forasmuch as this people have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is *taught by the precept of men*; therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

It may appear incredible to many, that you should fully admit this consequence, although it is the inevitable result of your reasonings. There are few minds, at the present day, however wedded to prescription and form, however great their distrust of the mass of the people, that would not shrink from the distinct avowal of such an opinion, even though it were privately cherished. I honor the frankness with which you express it, —

contrasted, as it is, with the ambiguity I have before lamented ; a more ingenious defence of the principle, perhaps, cannot be made, than that contained in the Note which you devote to the subject. At all events, we shall look in vain for a clearer statement of the opinion objected to, than the following words. “The full comprehension of the character and evidence of Christianity is the result of *studies which are pursued only by few*, and the *many want capacity* or opportunity to satisfy themselves on the subject by their independent, unassisted exertions.” (p. 57.) “It is said, that a *great majority of men are not capable* of investigating for themselves the evidences and character of Christianity, and therefore can have no reasonable foundation for their belief in Christianity. The direct answer is, that TRUST *in the information, judgment, and integrity of others*, to a greater or less extent, as it is a universal and necessary, is also a rational principle of belief.” (p. 63.)

The great majority of people, accordingly, having no power to perceive the intrinsic divinity of Christian truth, to behold the glory of God in the character of Christ, are doomed, by the very nature of the case, to dependence on the learned class, for the foundation of their faith.

The first astonishing circumstance connected

with this declaration is, that it was addressed to a body of Christians, whose prominent characteristic is the defence of freedom of mind, — of not only the right, but the duty, and of course, the power of private judgment, to the most unlimited extent. We have claimed to be the very Protestants of the Protestants ; our watchword has been, “The people, and not the priests ;” we have taken our stand on the broad foundation of the universal mind ; we have fought for the inherent privileges of humanity ; and if we have, in any degree, secured a hold on the affections of the community ; if the term “liberal Christian” is sacred and dear to any hearts among the breathing multitudes around us ; it is because we have discarded the lifeless formulas of the schools ; because we have sought to make Christianity a vital sentiment, instead of a barren tradition ; because we have endeavored to bring the Bible out of the “dusty corners” in which learned speculations had placed it ; and boldly appealed to the sense of truth in every man, to SEE and JUDGE for himself what is right.

Again, I cannot but be surprised at the remarkable confusion of the statement, in which you recognise no distinction between the evidence of the truth of physical science and that of moral and religious truth. You assert that “religious

knowledge has the character common to all our higher knowledge, that it requires labor, thought, and learning to attain it." (p. 54.) The truth of Christianity is to be received on the same ground, on which we admit, that "all the motions of the bodies of the solar system in relation to each other are to be referred to the one law of gravity." (p. 58.) The spiritual truths of Christianity are to be ascertained by the same method as the physical truths of astronomy. The growth in the "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," which is demanded of the most unlearned believer, is made to depend on the same conditions as the increase of our knowledge of "all subjects, lying beyond the sphere of personal experience." (p. 59.) Our faith no longer proceeds from the "demonstration of the Spirit;" it stands not "in the power of God," but "in the wisdom of men."

But if this theory be true, it not only makes a large proportion of unlettered Christians dependent on scholars for their knowledge of Christ, but actually deprives them of all religious knowledge whatever. They have not the requisite culture even to understand the results of critical investigation; they do not feel sufficient interest in the subject to make any inquiries concerning them; still, they "know" in whom they believe; they have a faith, no less rational, no less enlightened, no

less fervent, than that of the most profound anti-quary ; for they have the witness in their own hearts ; the truths of the Gospels are the very life of their souls ; they have seen, and tasted, and been nourished by the bread of God, which came down out of Heaven ; and it is in vain to tell them, that they are ignorant of the truth of Christianity, that they have no solid foundation for their faith, because they have not besieged the libraries of the learned, to ask them whether they might believe in Christ or no.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
 Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
 Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
 Has little understanding, and no wit,
 Receives no praise, but though her lot be such,
 (Toilsome and indigent,) she renders much ;
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true —
 And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
 Her title to a treasure in the skies.

Nor is it merely those whom we speak of in our pride, as the less favored classes, to whom the supply of their daily wants seems like a daily miracle, that are obliged to found their convictions of the truth of Christianity on more direct

evidence, than is furnished by the investigations of science for the truths of astronomy. The learned themselves are often so absorbed in their favorite studies, that they can give little attention to the critical researches of the theologian. Yet, if they are religious men, they feel that their faith is built on stronger evidence than he could supply them with. They do not need to solicit his advice before they can believe in Christianity. They have settled their faith for themselves ; and seen, from the intrinsic divinity of the Gospel, that it is the gift of God. They know that different branches of inquiry demand different kinds of evidence ; a scholastic logic, with them, is not the only organ of truth ; they have confidence in the inward eye, which penetrates where the telescope cannot reach ; they do not confound the truths of religion with the discoveries of astronomy, in regard to their manner of proof ; and, like our late eminent mathematician, who was a no less sincere Christian than sound philosopher, while they establish the facts of physical science by learned research and subtile calculations, they perceive the truths of the Gospel by the intuitions of the soul. That distinguished man, as we are informed in the beautiful tribute which filial piety has recently offered to his memory, was accustomed to dwell upon “ the fitness of the Gospel to purify

the heart and elevate the soul; and preferred to rest its authority upon these views, rather than upon any other;” while the doctrine, that “a belief in miracles is not essential to a belief in Christianity, received his approbation.”* A short time before his death, he told a friend, who has since stated the conversation in a public Eulogy,† worthy of the subject and the author, “I cannot remember when I had not the feeling of religious truth and accountability, and when I did not act from it, or endeavor to. In my boyish days, when some of my companions, who had become infected with Tom Paine’s infidelity, broached their notions in conversation with me, I battled it with them stoutly, not exactly with the logic you would get from Locke, but with the logic I found *here*, (pointing to his breast;) and here it has always been my guide and support; it is my support still.”‡

Still further, the course which you recommend is directly at variance with that pursued by our

* *Memoir of Nathaniel Bowditch*, by his Son, NATHANIEL INGERSOLL BOWDITCH, p. 152.

† See *Eulogy on the Life and Character of Nathaniel Bowditch*, by the HON. DANIEL APPLETON WHITE, p. 53.

‡ See *Memoir*, p. 161.

See also *Discourse on the Life and Character of Dr. Bowditch*, by the REV. ALEXANDER YOUNG, pp. 91, 92.

Savior himself. You maintain, that "extensive learning" is usually requisite for those who would influence their fellow-men on religious subjects. But Jesus certainly did not take this into consideration in the selection of the twelve from the mass of the disciples; he committed the promulgation of his religion to "unlearned and ignorant" men; the sublimest truths were entrusted to the most common minds; and, in this way, "God made foolish the wisdom of the world." You may say, that the choice of instruments was not at the command of Christ; but, I cannot doubt, that, if "extensive learning" had been indispensable, he would have found means to avail himself of its power. You will not maintain that the possession of inspiration removed the necessity of learning, for you inform us, "that neither the teaching of our Savior, nor the influences of God's spirit in enlightening the minds of the apostles, preserved them from all the errors of the age, from the influence of all human prejudices and feelings, from all inconclusive reasoning, or from all ambiguity, impropriety, and insufficiency in the use of language."* In short, notwithstanding the miraculous relations they sustained to God, they were singularly destitute of the qualifications, which,

* *Christian Examiner*, vol. vi. pp. 344, 345. Art. Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

in your view, are essential to the teacher of religion.

He, who "knew what was in man," however, made a far different estimate of the value of artificial culture, compared with the spontaneous wisdom of the healthy, religious soul, when enlightened by the spirit of God, the spirit of truth and goodness. His interview with the doctors in the temple, at twelve years of age, was probably not adapted to increase his confidence in the learned by profession; and his subsequent acquaintance with such minds as produced the Gospel of John and the Epistles of Peter would have proved, if proof were needed, that the soul of man is fitted to perceive the truths of religion, without the aid of extensive erudition. Christ honored man. He felt the worth of the soul. He knew its intimate connexion with God. He believed in the omnipresence of the Deity; but taught, that of all temples the "upright heart and pure" was most acceptable. He saw that the parade of wisdom, which books impart, was as nothing before "the light that enlighteneth every human mind." The whole course of his nation's history was an illustration of the fact, "that poor mechanics are wont to be God's great ambassadors to mankind." Hence, he gave no preference to Nicodemus, that master in Israel, or

to the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea, who, we may presume, had devoted his leisure to the cultivation of his mind, over Matthew the publican, or the sons of the fisherman Zebedee ; and while the former were hesitating between their convictions and their comforts at home, the latter were going barefoot from city to city to preach the kingdom of God. Christ established no college of Apostles ; he did not revive the school of the prophets which had died out ; he paid no distinguished respect to the pride of learning ; indeed, he sometimes intimates that it is an obstacle to the perception of truth ; and thanks God, that while he has hid the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven from the wise and prudent, he has made them known to men as ignorant as babes of the lore of the schools. Instead of selecting the scribes from the temple, the wise disputers of this world, the cautious Gamaliels who could balance probabilities to a hair, and who knew that no “future investigations would lead them to change their opinions,”* as the depositaries of his doctrine he planted it deep in the minds of Jewish peasants ; and while “other teachers have committed their wisdom to writing, lest, being entrusted to words, which are but breath, it should be dis-

* *Discourse*, p. 61.

persed and lost, Jesus confided in the *divine energy of his doctrine*, and with an unconcern truly sublime, cast it abroad to make its own way, and perpetuate its own existence, — sufficient proof that he knew it to be from God.”* He was content to entrust the record of his history with unlettered disciples, who were drawn to the cross by the Spirit of the Father, without desiring it to be accompanied with the annotations of “a philosopher of a mind as enlarged as that of Cicero.”†

Once more, I am obliged to differ from your conclusions with regard to the practical importance of scholars to the interests of religion. Perhaps I may venture to hope, that I am not likely to be accused of indifference to human learning. But I cannot fall in with the extravagant pretensions that you urge in its favor. I deny that it entitles its possessor to the claim of infallibility. True learning, in my opinion, is as modest as it is inquisitive; it searches for truth with a lowly and reverent aspect; it never counts itself to have yet

* *Sermon* at the Ordination of Rev. W. H. Furness, by HENRY WARE, JR., p. 9.

† See *Christian Examiner*, vol. vi. p. 344. Art. Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

See also *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, vol. ii. pp. 543, 551–553, where the above sentiment is animadverted on, as “the latest form of infidelity.”

attained ; it never presumes to assert that it can gain no further light on any subject ; conscious of frailty, it communes with all wise teachers ; and in meek self-dependence, compares the lessons they announce with the oracles of God. Such learning blesses both its disciples and those to whom they are sent ; the former obtain from the latter no less instruction than they give ; their reverence for man is too deep to permit the exercise of scorn ; and in free and trusting intercourse with all varieties of their fellow men, they feel that they are living to learn ; they are growing old in the pursuit of wisdom, with the freshness of children, *γηρασκουσι διδασκομενοι* ; and the thought, that no clearer views of truth were yet to visit their minds, would almost bring them to the grave before their time.

A more sincere veneration for human beings I cannot feel, than for scholars of this character. I honor the learned, when they devote their attainments to the service of society ; when they cherish a stronger interest in the welfare of their brethren, than in the luxury of their books ; when they bring the researches of science to the illustration of truth, the correction of abuses, and the aid of the sufferer ; but if they do not acknowledge a higher light than that which comes from the printed page ; if they confound the posses-

sion of erudition with the gift of wisdom ; and above all, if they presume to interfere in the communion of the soul with God, and limit the universal bounty of Heaven within their “smoky cells,” I can only utter my amazement.

Christian truth has always been addressed to the “intuitive perceptions” of the common mind. The Gospel was first preached to the poor ; and with the “poor in spirit,” those who renounced the pride of learning, who “loved to lie low in God’s power,” and listen to his secret voice within the heart, it has always found its most faithful friends. A shallow and presumptuous philosophy, — presumptuous, because shallow, — usurps the place of the simplicity of Christ, and would fain smother the breathing life of heavenly truth. Creeds came into the Church with the dreams of speculation ; they have been handed down through the dust of the schools ; they have sought their principal defence in the subtile, shadowy, and artificial distinctions of the learned ; and the most vigorous attacks they have received have come from the unarmed strength of plebeian sects. The sword of the Spirit is not wielded after the tactics of a University ; and even a shepherd’s sling has often proved more powerful than the spear of a giant.

I rejoice to find the confirmation of these sentiments in the following noble language from a friend of Christian liberty abroad. "Though no one honors scholarship more, or has a profounder veneration for its functions, I yet declare, that Christianity is a religion for the people; that Christ is manifested to the heart and soul of every man whom he attracts by heavenly sympathy; that when not many wise, not many learned were called, the lowly, but honest in heart, recognised the divine brightness, and sat at the feet of Jesus, docile and rejoicing; and I protest altogether against any learned aristocracy, any literary hierarchy, any priestly mediators having more of the true light that lighteth every man, than the humblest of their brethren, who has taken to his heart the free gift of God, and loves the Lord Jesus with sincerity. — The rightful privileges of critics and scholars are large enough, and let no man disown them; but I do disown this literary hierarchy arrogating to themselves sole access to the oracles of God, and limiting Christ's free approach to the souls of the people to long processes of inferential reasonings, and the winding ways of a syllogism. I entreat them to stand aside, and let the living Jesus come into communication with the living heart, and not place themselves, like the multitude who threatened the blind beside

the way, between the ready mercy of the Heavenly Teacher and the humblest follower who seeks his face, that a ray of the light that shineth there may fall upon eager and wistful, though dimmed and earth-stained, eyes.”*

I am admonished by the length of this letter, that it is time to bring my examination of your Discourse to a close, although there are several points on which I should gladly comment, that I have left untouched. I have probably said enough, however, to show that the exclusive doctrine which you advance is incapable of support; and that the charge of infidelity against those Christians, whose belief in revelation is not founded on evidence which you approve, was made without due consideration. I trust, also, that my remarks may tend to produce a deeper conviction of the value and power of the internal evidence of our religion; to satisfy the unlearned believer especially, that the doubts cast by critical scholars on the foundation of his faith are unworthy of attention; that he is not following a “cunningly devised fable,” when he holds to the divine origin

* *Christianity not the Property of Critics and Scholars, but the Gift of God to all Men.* A Lecture, delivered in Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool, by REV. JOHN HAMILTON THOM. pp. 17, 20.

of the Gospel ; since he is an “ eye-witness ” of the “ majesty ” of Christ, and hears a voice from the “ excellent glory ” of his character, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

I might, accordingly, leave the subject in this place, trusting to the ingenuousness and good sense, which shall be brought to the perusal of my letter, for the formation of a correct judgment on the question that has been discussed.

There are one or two topics, however, of a literary and historical character, — which, though not immediately connected with the subject, are interesting not only to scholars, but to all who desire accurate information in regard to the progress of opinion, — that I could not be excused for neglecting.

You undertake to give some account of the religious opinions of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and De Wette ; in this account you have fallen into several errors, which it is my duty to correct.

I commence with Spinoza, whom, in accordance with a traditional prejudice, you speak of as “ a celebrated atheist.” (p. 9.) This prejudice was early circulated against Spinoza, as well as against his master, Descartes, on account of the freedom with which they examined received opin-

ions; it was cherished by bigoted and ignorant theologians; the skeptic Bayle, in one of his fits of caprice, zealously upheld it; mainly, I think, through his influence, has it come down to modern times; but there are few scholars, conversant, even in a slight degree, with philosophical studies, that would now give it their sanction.

You assert that "to deny the atheism of Spinoza, is merely to contend, that the word is not to be used in its common and established sense." (p. 45.) Now the very reverse of this statement, as I shall show, would express the truth. Spinoza cannot be called an atheist, unless a meaning be given to the word which it does not usually bear. If you say that it is atheism, to call in question certain prevailing conceptions of the Deity, which agree with your own views, then was Spinoza an atheist; otherwise, he was not. But this is not the sense attached to the word in common language. No usage will justify the application of the term atheist to a man, who believes in the existence of God, though his notions of the Deity may differ from popular opinions, and though they be really defective and erroneous. The Jewish nation certainly were not atheists, because they had not reached the Christian doctrine of a paternal God; still less was the Jewish Spinoza an atheist, because he sought for

more elevated ideas of the Supreme Cause, than were taught by the sensual Rabbis in the synagogue of Amsterdam.

According to the established use of language, in ordinary discourse, particularly in this country, Spinoza was neither an atheist nor a pantheist.

By an atheist, is understood one who denies the existence of an Infinite, Original Cause, on whose power all finite beings depend. A man who admits this can, with no propriety, be called an atheist, whatever be his errors in other respects. Now the doctrine which lies at the foundation of Spinoza's system is the existence of an infinite, first cause; not identical with visible nature, but superior to it, by the whole difference between the infinite and the finite; who possesses intelligence and love; whose nature is perfect, capable of being understood, so far as revealed to man, but in its infinite attributes, incomprehensible; whose exhaustless energy is the ground of all finite existence; who is manifested in the Universe everywhere; and in adoring and loving whom, man finds the highest blessedness of his soul.

"I understand by God," says Spinoza, "the Infinite and Absolute Being, independent and self-existent, possessing infinite attributes, each one

of which expresses his eternal and infinite essence.” *

“ Whatever exists, exists in God, and without God nothing can exist, or be conceived of.” †

“ God acts solely from the laws of his own nature, free from all external restraints.” ‡

“ God is the permanent and indwelling cause of all things; not the transient and temporary cause.” §

“ God is the efficient cause not only of the existence of the Universe, but of its essence.” ||

We thus see by quotations from his own writings, that Spinoza, by no fair construction, can be liable to the accusation of atheism. It may be said, however, that if he maintains the existence of God, he deprives him of his essential attributes; that if he be not an atheist, he is a pantheist.

By pantheism, in the sense in which that word is commonly used, though very improperly, is understood the confounding of the Deity with the material universe. This doctrine represents God as a being devoid of intelligence, acting by mechanical laws, and differing, in no respect, from the manifold whole which we call visible nature.

* *Opera*, *Ethica*, pars i. def. 6.

† *Ibid.* prop. xvii.

§ *Ibid.* prop. xviii.

‡ *Ibid.* prop. xv.

|| *Ibid.* prop. xxv.

This is the view, I am told, that is held by some individuals who are regarded as atheists among ourselves. It is a view which is vulgarly ascribed to Spinoza ; but without the slightest reason. In this sense, he was not a pantheist. The idle story which you quote from Le Clerc, that Meyer [not Mayer] induced Spinoza to substitute the word God for Nature, where the former now appears, is without foundation. Even if it had more satisfactory external evidence for its support, it would be contradicted by the whole spirit of Spinoza's writings. The substitution of the word Nature for God could not now be made without destroying his system. You will perceive this from the following passages, which I cannot but think have escaped your notice.

“ My ideas of Nature and of God are indeed widely different from those defended by modern Christians. I maintain that God is the permanent and indwelling cause of all things, not the transient and temporary cause. All things, I say, are in God, and move in God ; this I affirm with Paul, and perhaps also with all the ancient philosophers, although not in their sense ; and I might even say, with all the ancient Hebrews, as far as can be conjectured from certain traditions, although variously corrupted. But as to the opinion of some persons, who think I have maintained the doc-

trine that God and Nature, (by which they understand a certain mass, or corporeal matter,) are one and the same, — they are entirely out of the way, (*tota errant via.*”)*

“Thought is one of the infinite attributes of God, which expresses his eternal and infinite essence, or God is a thinking being. This proposition is evident from the fact, that we can conceive of an infinite thinking being. For the more objects of thought are possessed by a thinking being, the more reality and perfection do we conceive that being to possess; the being, therefore, who possesses infinite objects of thought, is necessarily infinite in the power of thinking. Since, then, by attending to thought alone, we conceive of an infinite being, thought is necessarily one of the infinite attributes of God.”†

“The intelligence and will which we should regard as constituting the essence of God, must differ entirely from human intelligence and will. The intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is indeed the cause both of the essence and of the existence of the Universe. The intelligence of God, then, is the cause both of the essence and the existence of our intelligence; and must therefore differ

* *Opera*, Epistola xxi.

† *Ethica*, pars ii. prop. i.

from it, as that which is caused differs from its cause, namely, in that which it receives from its cause.” *

“ God necessarily has the idea both of his own essence, and of every thing which necessarily follows from his essence. The vulgar understand by the power of God an arbitrary will [*liberam voluntatem*, a will free from the everlasting laws of wisdom and justice], but we have shown that God acts with the same necessity [the same adherence to the laws of his own infinite nature] with which HE KNOWS HIMSELF ; that is, as it follows from the necessity of the divine nature, that God should know himself, by the same necessity, it follows that he should act in an infinite variety of modes.” †

You will now perceive that Spinoza was not an atheist, in any sense ; nor a pantheist, in the sense in which that word is commonly used. He was a pantheist, in the philosophical sense only ; by this is meant, that he denied real, substantial existence to finite objects ; all apparent life is in truth the divine life ; “ the fulness of Him, who filleth all in all ” ; the spirit of his system is expressed in the sublime Hebrew ascription, “ THOU ART, and beside thee there is none else.” But no

* *Ethica*, pars i. prop. xvii.

† *Ibid.* pars i. prop. iii.

one, who understands the subject, will accuse this doctrine of an irreligious tendency. It is religious even to mysticism ; on that account, as well as for certain philosophical objections, it labors under, I cannot adopt it, as a theory of the Universe ; but I trust I shall never cease to venerate the holy and exalted spirit of its author, who, in the meek simplicity of his life, the transparent beauty of his character, and the pure devotion with which he wooed truth, even as a bride, stands almost “ alone and unapproached ” among men.

You may possibly imagine that my respect for the personal virtues of Spinoza has betrayed me into an erroneous view of the character of his system. It may be worth while, therefore, to fortify my statements by a reference to some of the principal authorities in the authentic history of opinions.

“ That Spinoza was no atheist,” says Herder, “ appears from every page of his writings. The idea of God is to him the first and the last ; nay, the single idea, with which he connects the knowledge of Nature and of the Universe, the consciousness of himself and of every thing around him, and his system of Ethics and Politics. Without the conception of God, his soul is nothing, and can do nothing, not even conceive of itself. It seems strange and almost incomprehensible to

him, how men could have regarded God, only as a consequence, as it were, of other truths, nay, of sensible observation, since all truth, no less than all existence, is derived from an eternal, self-subsisting truth, from the Infinite and Eternal existence of God. This conception is cherished by Spinoza, with such an inward and vital earnestness, that I should esteem him rather an enthusiast for the existence of God, than a doubter or denier of it. In the knowledge and love of God, he places all the perfection, virtue, and happiness of man ; and that this is no mask, but the conviction of the philosopher, is shown by his letters, I might indeed say, by the smallest fragment of his philosophical system, by every line that he has written. He may, it is true, have erred in his idea of God ; but how readers of his works could say, that he has denied the idea of God, and maintained atheism, is utterly incomprehensible.” *

“ The system of Spinoza,” says Tennemann, one of the soundest thinkers that ever wrote on the history of philosophy, “ according to the spirit and purpose of its author, is not atheism, although at first it was regarded as such by most of his ad-

* HERDER's *Gott*, Werke, vol. ix. pp. 132, 133.

versaries, rather from personal hatred than from insight into his character.”*

“That Spinoza’s system,” says Rixner, a later writer of a different school, “according to the peculiar view of its author, is not a system of atheism, is evident.”†

“The system of Spinoza,” says Francke, one of his ablest critics, “cannot be called atheism. The atheist denies an intelligent cause of the Universe. Spinoza asserts the existence of an indwelling cause of the Universe, to whom he attributes infinite thought.”‡

“With all the defects of his system,” says Krause, “Spinoza cannot be designated as an atheist, a teacher of no God, nor as a pantheist, (if by pantheism, we mean the doctrine that the world itself, considered as the sum total of finite things is God); because God is to him the principle and the only substantial ground of all science; and absolutely nothing finite is God.”§

“It is clear,” says Krug, a writer who never hesitates to give a hard name where there is just occasion, “that Spinoza cannot be numbered

* TENNEMANN’S *Grundriss*, (Wendt’s Ed.) p. 379.

† RIXNER’S *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. iii. p. 79.

‡ FRANCKE’S *Versuch über die neuern Schicksale des Spinozismus*, p. 22.

§ KRAUSE’S *Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft*, p. 339.

among atheists, either practical or theoretical. For he does not deny the existence of God, but, on the contrary, expressly acknowledges God as an intelligent being, and the cause of all things. The question between him and his adversaries, many of whom were far below him both intellectually and morally, turns on a speculative point, namely, Is God the permanent and indwelling cause, or the transient and temporary cause of the universe? Every answer given to this question involves our limited understanding in inextricable difficulties. In a practical point of view, accordingly, we may prefer one answer to another. But because a man has a different opinion from ourselves on this question, we ought not to call him an atheist. This is always uncharitable, and indicates a heart which itself is not yet penetrated with the spirit of true religion.”*

The authority of the most eminent living French writers on the history of philosophy is on the same side.

“Instead of accusing Spinoza of atheism,” says Cousin, “we ought rather to bring the contrary reproach;” namely, that of allowing substantial and real existence to God alone, and “regarding man and nature as mere phenomena.”†

* KRUG'S *Encyklopädisch-philosophisches Lexicon*, vol. iii. p. 836.

† COUSIN, *Histoire de la Philosophie*, vol. i. pp. 465, 466.

“So far from being an atheist, as has been pretended, Spinoza has such a deep sense of the existence of God, that he loses all sense of the existence of man. This temporary and limited existence, like every thing finite, appeared to him unworthy the name of existence; and in his sight there is no true, substantial being, but the Eternal Being. His book, all bristling as it is with geometrical formulas, so dry and repulsive in its style, is, in fact, a mystic hymn, an ejaculation of the soul towards the Being, who alone is authorized to say I AM THAT I AM. Spinoza is a Persian Sufi, an enthusiastic monk; and the author whom this reputed atheist most resembles is the unknown author of ‘The Imitation of Jesus Christ.’ ” *

“It may be supposed,” says Jouffroy, “that it follows from the first principles of this system, that the Universe is God, or that God is the aggregate of existing things. Not so. Spinoza decidedly rejects this idea. The thought of God has the property not only of representing all his other attributes and their modes, but also of representing itself. God, in other words, has, for the object of thought, not only his own essence, and every thing which proceeds from it, but also his

* COUSIN, *Fragments Philosophiques*, (3d Edit.) vol. ii. pp. 164, 165, 166.

thought itself. Otherwise his ideas would be less comprehensive than his nature, and he would be ignorant of one of his own attributes, namely, intelligence. The divine thought, accordingly, is conscious of itself, and its modifications, as it knows all the other attributes of God.”*

We thus see to what extent your account of Spinoza can be relied on. Let us now pass to your remarks concerning Schleiermacher.

You represent Schleiermacher, as one of “the most noted of the modern German school of infidelity,” as a pantheist, as a denier of the immortality of the soul, and as an admirer of Spinoza. (pp. 43, 44.) The latter charge need not be set aside, for the disinterested tribute of one original man to another is always gratifying, and speaks well for the character of both. You attempt to support your allegations by the citation of detached passages from one of Schleiermacher’s earliest writings, without the qualifications which guard them where they stand, and without any reference to his subsequent productions, in which his theological views are more fully and distinctly expressed. In this way, you have presented an erroneous idea of his position as a theologian,

* JOUFFROY, *Droit Naturel*, vol. i. pp. 170, 172.

and treated with injustice the character of one of the most sincere and exemplary men, who have ever devoted their lives to the service of truth.

In the first place, you speak of the work to which you refer, as containing "an elaborate system," "drawn out" for the purpose of exhibiting the conceptions of the author in regard to Christianity. This is a misapprehension of the design of the book. An accurate knowledge of the literary history of the period, in which it was written, would have prevented the mistake. The "Discourses on Religion" were not intended to present a system of theology. They are highly rhetorical in their manner, filled with bursts of impassioned eloquence, always intense and sometimes extravagant, addressed to the feelings, not to speculation, and expressly disclaiming all pretensions to an exposition of doctrine. They were published at a time when hostility to religion, and especially to Christianity as a divine revelation, was deemed a proof of talent and refinement. The influence of the church was nearly exhausted; the highest efforts of thought were of a destructive character; a frivolous spirit pervaded society; religion was deprived of its supremacy; and a "starveling theology" was exalted in the place of the living word. Schleiermacher could not contemplate the wretched

meagerness and degradation of his age, without being moved as by "a heavenly impulse." His spirit was stirred within him as he saw men turning from the true God to base idols. He felt himself impelled to go forth, with the power of a fresh and youthful enthusiasm, for the restoration of religion; to present it in its most sublime aspect, free from its perversions, disentangled from human speculation, as founded in the essential nature of man, and indispensable to the complete unfolding of his inward being. In order to recognise every thing which is really religion among men, and to admit even the lowest degrees of it into the idea of religion, he wished to make this as broad and comprehensive in its character as possible.* "Religion," says Coleridge, "in its widest sense, signifies the act and habit of reverencing the Invisible, as the highest both in ourselves and in nature." It is in this sense that the word religion is used throughout the "Discourses;" and nothing, accordingly, could have been further from the author's intention, than to present any thing like an elaborate or complete system of speculative doctrine. He addresses himself to the educated men of Germany, not with a

* See LÜCKE'S *Erinnerungen*, translated in the *Christian Examiner*, vol. xx. pp. 17, 18.

view to gain their assent to a theological creed, but to touch the springs of their better nature, to rebuke their proud disdain of divine things, and, like the great moral poet of England,

To arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures.

“ I know,” says he, “ that it is quite as little your custom to honor the Deity in the holy stillness of retirement, as to frequent his deserted temples. I know that in your decorated dwellings no other sacred things are to be found, than the wise oracles of our sages, and the glorious creations of our artists ; that society and humanity, science and art, so far as you deem them worthy of your attention, have so completely engrossed your minds, as to leave no room for the Eternal and Infinite One, who exists for you beyond the limits of the visible world. I know how admirably you have succeeded in giving such a rich and comprehensive culture to the present earthly life, that you appear to have no need of Eternity ; that having created a Universe for yourselves, you are now absolved from thinking of him who created you. Of all these things I am perfectly sensible. And yet, commanded by an inward and irresistible necessity, I feel constrained

to speak, as by an impulse from on high. I cannot take back my request, that you above all others should hear what I have to say.” * “I maintain that piety is the necessary and spontaneous product of the depths of every elevated nature ; that it possesses a rightful claim to a peculiar province in the soul, over which it may exercise an unlimited sovereignty ; that it is worthy, by its intrinsic power, to be a source of life to the most noble and exalted minds ; and that, from its essential character, it deserves to be known and received by them. These are the points which I defend, and which I would fain establish. I leave it with you to decide, whether it be worth your while to listen to me, before you are still more strengthened in your contempt for religion.” †

Such an undertaking would almost of necessity preclude all systematic theological discussion. We find, accordingly, that this is the case. Still, you charge the author with denying the doctrine both of a personal God and of personal immortality. You were probably led into this error by failing to notice the object of the work, which was not to examine the truth or falsehood of any abstract conceptions, but to show that so far as

* *Reden über die Religion*, pp. 1, 2.

† *Ibid.* p. 25.

they were MERELY SPECULATIVE, limited to the sphere of science, without influence on the feelings, they were not ESSENTIAL to the life of religion within the soul. The popular representations of God and of immortality present difficulties to every reflecting mind ; they are founded, to a great extent, on the analogy of human relations ; it has always been an important problem to separate between the true and the false in these representations ; for my own part, I cannot conceive of a thoughtful, religious man, in our day, whom this problem has not exercised ; nor can I believe that one who comprehends the subject will make any specific solution indispensable to true piety. This is a prominent view in Schleiermacher's " Discourse." It was his aim to show that the essence of religion is independent of speculation ; that the heart is its seat, not the head ; that we need not by " searching to find out God, to understand the Almighty to perfection," before we can " worship him in spirit and truth." " The accusation of pantheism," says Lücke, " has been urged against Schleiermacher principally on account of these ' Discourses,' often in a thoughtless spirit, but sometimes with reflection and seriousness. The appearance, nay, here and there a decided expression, is certainly against him. But he only, who overlooks the peculiar object and

position of the "Discourses" in relation to their times, and confounds their merely external and adventitious details with their central principles; who regards as pantheism every profound and inward apprehension of the indissoluble connexion between God and the Universe, which exists in the religious nature, and prefers every chilling and mechanical view of the world as destitute of the agency of the living God to any softening and enlargement of his rigid and exclusive notions, can believe that pantheism was Schleiermacher's genuine and permanent opinion. At least, after what he has said himself in explanation of this subject in the third edition, it is impossible to repeat the charge without wilful unkindness." *

I regret that the explanations referred to are of such a length as to forbid their insertion in this place. It may be seen, however, from the following extract, that the conceptions which Schleiermacher renounces as essential to religion, are only those which are taken from human and earthly relations, and which consequently pervert every spiritual idea of God and immortality. "As the conception of the HUMAN personality of God usually presupposes a consciousness that is not

* *Erinnerungen*, translated in the *Christian Examiner*, vol. xx. p. 18.

morally pure, the same thing may be assumed in the conception of immortality, which represents it after the manner of the Elysian fields, only as a new earth of greater beauty and extent. And as we must admit an essential difference between the inability to form such a HUMAN AND PERSONAL conception of God, and the denial of the existence of a LIVING GOD, — which last alone can be designated as atheism ; in like manner, he who does not incline to such a MATERIAL CONCEPTION of immortality, is very far from discarding the GENUINE HOPE of immortality. And as we may call every man religious, who believes in a LIVING GOD, we may also call every one religious, who believes in the EVERLASTING LIFE OF THE SOUL, without wishing to define the way or the manner, in which it must be conceived.” *

We come now to a still more extraordinary error, which arose probably from the habit, too prevalent among us, of grouping together theologians who have scarce any thing in common, but the language in which they write. You class Schleiermacher with the modern German school, whose disciples are called Rationalists or Naturalists. (pp. 43, 45.) Now although Schleiermacher attempted to modify the old Lutheran theology,

* *Reden*, p. 141.

on several important points, he was a strenuous advocate of the supernatural origin of Christianity; his whole life was a controversy against the Rationalist school; and his works are supposed to have contributed more than any thing else to its decline. If a foreign writer were to describe the celebrated Dr. Beecher, as one of "the most noted" of the Unitarian school in New-England, because he has been thought to question some of the principles of the prevailing orthodoxy, it would not be a more whimsical mistake, than to place Schleiermacher among the leaders of a party with which he sustained only the relation of uncompromising hostility. "It is perfectly easy," says Röhr, the most distinguished Rationalist preacher now living, "to comprehend the hatred of Schleiermacher and his school to Rationalism, the hereditary enemy of such a system as his."* "If the deistical Rationalism of the earlier schools of theology," says the orthodox Lücke, "has ever suffered prostration, it has suffered it from the great work of Schleiermacher, entitled 'Doctrines of the Christian Faith.' Much that professes to be a decided victory over it, it could have overcome, but it will never recover from the deadly wound, which has been inflicted on it, by the

* *Krit. Pred. Bib.*, vol. xix. p. 852.

truly rational, but not *rationalistic* Dogmatics of Schleiermacher.”*

The theological views of Schleiermacher are little known in this country. His writings present no attractions for the superficial reader; they cannot be understood without profound reflection; but they are well worth the attention of our studious young men. If any are inclined to German Rationalism, they will here find a corrective; and it was probably with these convictions, that so much importance has been attached to the opinions of Schleiermacher by Professor Stuart of Andover, and by Dr. Leonard Woods, jr., late Professor at Bangor, now President of Bowdoin College. Those eminent scholars and theologians are, perhaps, better qualified to pronounce a correct judgment on the character and tendencies of German theology, than any other individuals in this country. They have made it the object of extensive and systematic study; their knowledge of it is not confined to imperfect information obtained from Encyclopædias and Reviews; and their ability to survey it as a whole leads them to form an accurate estimate of its separate portions. No one can suspect them of attachment to Ration-

* *Erinnerungen*, translated in the *Christian Examiner*, vol. xx. p. 31.

alism ; on the contrary, they have been faithful and earnest in pointing out its character, and opposing its influence ; but it is through their means chiefly, that Schleiermacher has been brought before the notice of the community ; they have found in his opinions a support of the orthodox faith. At the same time, they have encouraged an acquaintance with German theological writers of different schools ; no idle terrors have scared them away from the pursuit of truth ; and their hearty and scholarlike liberality in this respect may rebuke those of us, who, with greater pretensions to freedom, have been less consistent in its exercise. The same spirit prevails at the Theological Seminary, which has long borne the reproach of being firmly anchored to a stationary theology. Widely as I dissent from the doctrinal creeds of that Institution, I cannot but recognise, with joy and honor, the spirit of Christian liberty, which suggested such language as follows. “ We believe,” say two of the Andover Professors in a recent publication, “ that some among us are troubled over much about the speculative notions of the day. It is well to be cautious, — not so well to be in a fright. It is a good thing to give heed lest the spirit of our religion be circumscribed or expelled ; but it is needless to raise a panic because one man prefers this mode and

another that of explaining the one faith. Let not the grasshopper become a burden to us, while we are so young a people. — Let us see how men good and true are now speculating in foreign climes, and we shall be convinced that the sky does not close in with the earth four or five miles from the spot where we happen to stand, however central that spot may be. There are things in the world that we have never yet heard of.” *

According to Schleiermacher, the revelation of God in nature, and in the human soul, is only a preparation for a perfect revelation through Christ. The purpose of God in the creation of man is completed in the Christian revelation. This is a new, original communication of divine truth, a fresh manifestation of the divine life in the person and works of Jesus Christ. He is appointed by God to be the Redeemer of the world; hence he needed not redemption himself; and, agreeably to the universal doctrine of the Church, was originally distinguished from all other men, and endowed with divine power from his birth.†

The opinions of the school founded by Schleiermacher concerning Rationalism and Supernatural-

* *Selections from German Literature*, by B. B. EDWARDS and E. A. PARK, pp. 11, 12.

† See *Christliche Glaube*, vol. i. chap. i. sect. ii.

See also RÄTZE'S *Erläuterungen*, pp. 113 – 118.

ism can hardly be better expressed than in the following passage from Ullmann.*

* Ullmann, one of the most independent, moderate, and discriminating followers of Schleiermacher, I rejoice to perceive, is beginning to attract the attention of theologians in this country. He richly deserves to be studied, and cannot but exert a purifying influence on every mind conversant with his writings. The views, which he maintains with admirable clearness and strength in the Treatise entitled "The Sinless Character of Jesus," (translated in the "Selections from German Literature," by Professors Edwards and Park,) are adapted to convince many of the truth of Christianity, whom the external evidences, so called, have no power to affect. I cannot resist the temptation to introduce here, though somewhat out of place, the following exposition of the value of the argument from miracles, as held by the school of Schleiermacher. "The nature of the case and the necessities of their contemporaries fully justified the Apostles in proving the divine mission and the Messiahship of Jesus by the argument from miracles and prophecy. But the necessity of the times and of individuals may in this respect vary; and although the Gospel in its *essence* always remains the same, and contains eternal, unchangeable truth, yet in a different age, a different method of proof may lead more immediately to the acknowledgment of this truth. In our own time, it seems proper to fix our eyes especially on the spiritual character of Jesus, in order to obtain satisfactory proof of the divinity of his mission and instructions; not because the Apostolical mode of proof has become untenable, but because this other mode has a more vital efficacy on account of the style of education prevalent at the present day. We live among contemporaries to whom miracles are more a ground of doubt than of faith; we should not forget that the proof from miracles exerts its full power, properly speaking, on none but the eye-witnesses of them, and conducts us to the desired conclusion only by a circuitous path. On the other hand, a vivid apprehension of the inward character of Jesus brings us nearer to the operative centre of Christi-

“Supernaturalism in its exclusive character, particularly as it has heretofore been exhibited, regards revelation as an isolated, historical fact, attested by prophecies and miracles, contained in

anity, and at the same time, makes us feel the influence of the moral power, which goes forth from that centre. Here faith in Jesus rests immediately on himself; it is free, spiritual confidence in his person.” PROFESSOR PARK’S *Translation*, pp. 391, 392.

I subjoin the remarks of the Translator, to which I would invite the reader’s special attention. It is gratifying, I confess, to find so decided a confirmation of the doctrine, which has been reproached as infidelity, from a source which, I presume, labors under no such suspicion.

“The argument from miracles,” says Professor Park, “is not the kind of proof to which the majority of cordial believers in the Bible are, at the present day, most attached. They have neither the time nor the ability to form an estimate of the historical evidence, that favors or opposes the actual occurrence of miracles. They know the Bible to be true, because they feel it to be so. The excellence of its morality, like a magnet, attracts their souls; and sophistry, which they cannot refute, will not weaken their faith, resulting as it does from the ACCORDANCE OF THEIR HIGHER NATURE WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE BIBLE. The internal argument in favor of Christianity is also recommended by its moral influence. The full exhibition of it is a melting appeal to the heart; and as the heart becomes the more susceptible, the argument becomes the more convincing. With the unlettered Christian, then, the moral evidence for the Bible is the more effectual, because the more simple; with the educated Christian it is so, because the more dignified. It may be questioned, indeed, *whether the argument from miracles is not LOGICALLY DEPENDENT, for its complete force, on its CONNEXION with the argument from the MORAL NATURE of Christianity.*” — *Selections from German Literature*, p. 454.

an infallible form, in the Scriptures, from which its truths are to be derived, merely by the application of historical and grammatical interpretation and the rules of logic. Its defect is, that it teaches a revelation, which was made merely as a mechanical system, (*Deus ex machina*,) destitute of any vital connexion with nature and history, nay, in decided opposition to both ; which contradicts reason, or at least is so foreign to it, that the province of reason in the appropriation and working up of its truths is merely formal ; that reason at most can establish the reality of inspiration and revelation, but can by no means make out the inward truth of that which is revealed, or which proceeds from inspiration.

“Rationalism, on the other hand, in its exclusive character, rejects the belief in an immediate, divine revelation in general ; and substitutes reason in its place, as the only essential source of knowledge ; but allows to historical revelation, so far as it admits the name, the only merit of introducing the most important truths of reason, and collecting an ecclesiastical community for their support. Its defect is, that it knows nothing of a divine revelation, in the full sense of the word ; that regarding Christianity only as an historical, human, natural phenomenon, it denies its divine origin, and strips it of its highest dignity ;

that, taking for granted, without just grounds, the perfect soundness and absolute sufficiency of reason, in its present state, and often confounding it with the lower faculty of the understanding, it makes it the only source of divine knowledge, and the ultimate arbiter in matters of faith.

“ Both systems, in this form, have evidently produced injurious effects ; the former has reduced theology to an external and unscientific character, and converted the examination of doctrines into the criticism of words ; the latter has deprived Christianity of its intrinsic character, treated its history in an arbitrary manner, and failed to satisfy the wants of faith and of the deeper religious feelings. But we must also allow to each system its peculiar merits. Supernaturalism has guarded the essential truths of Christianity ; Rationalism has maintained the rights of scientific investigation ; we owe to the former, that, without a total interruption of scientific progress, we are returning to a more complete recognition of the characteristic truths of Christianity, and of the historical elements of religion in general ; we owe to the latter, that the faith in revelation, which is now forming in theology, must necessarily be scientific, conscious of the internal truth of the doctrines which it accepts.

“ But we must make a broad distinction be-

tween Rationalism, as a merely temporary system, and rationality, as the subjection to reason, and the constitutive essence of science. In like manner, we must make a broad distinction between Supernaturalism, as a temporary form, and the faith in revelation which is essential to Christianity, and which cannot be separated from it, but with the loss of its fundamental characteristics."

A sound theology, according to Schleiermacher and Ullmann, must combine all that is valuable in both systems, reject their exclusive and extravagant tendencies of each, and thus obtain a higher view of divine truth, than was presented by either doctrine in itself. The manner in which this is to be accomplished will appear from what follows. "The true medium, which results from the process of reconciliation, is not merely the general negation of error, or a spectral indifference between the extremes; not any thing abstract or barren; but a positive reception of the whole truth, and the most complete development of it on every side. The highest and most comprehensive truth of the divine life in the soul of man reposes in Christ. He in his complete personality, divine and human at once, in the untroubled, undiminished fulness of his being, is, in the highest sense, the true medium, the mediator between Divinity and Humanity, the central point

of the world's history, the exhaustless fountain of all progressive spiritual life ; he, who is made to us not only redemption, but wisdom ; in whom God not only was, and reconciled the world to himself, but who also, revealing the divine light and life, could say of himself, ' I am the truth, which maketh free ; I am the light of the world, and he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.' ” *

Such is the design and endeavor of what may be called the leading school in modern German theology. The impression of the powerful genius of Schleiermacher is every where visible on its character ; but it includes no servile disciples ; it combines men of free minds, who respect each other's efforts, whatever may be their individual conclusions ; and the central point at which they meet is the acknowledgment of the divine character of Christ, the divine origin of his religion, and its adaptation to be the faith of the world, when presented in a form corresponding with its inherent spirit, and with the scientific culture of the present age. There are few persons who would venture to charge such a school with the promulgation of infidelity ; there are many, I

* See ULLMANN'S *Über Partei and Schule*, in *Stud. und Krit.* vol. i. 1836.

doubt not, who will welcome its principles, as soon as they are understood, as the vital, profound, and ennobling theology, which they have earnestly sought for, but hitherto sought in vain.

I would gladly pass over, without comment, the notices you have given of De Wette. They need no critical exposure to show to every German scholar the propriety of the authoritative tone, in which you speak of German theology. And never is it a grateful task to diminish the confidence which may be reposed in a teacher, by those with whom the expression of his opinion has the weight of an oracle. The accuracy and fairness of a scholar are too tender points to be even lightly touched, though they may be subject to well-founded suspicion, unless there be an imperative reason, almost amounting to necessity, to forego the scruples of delicacy, and sacrifice reserve to justice. If, therefore, I consulted my own feelings alone, I should leave those notices in silence. If they were merely the errors of frailty, and not sins of presumption, I could not prevail on myself to point out their character.

But when you discuss elaborate works in a few lines, with the pretension of superior knowledge; when you charge those, who find "meaning" and sense in favorite writers, with "vague and in-

consistent conceptions ;” when you accuse one of the most illustrious theologians of the age with “unformed notions” and “incoherent ideas ;” when you venture to intimate that one of the noblest and purest of men is guilty of deception and folly ; it is necessary to remind you that by such personalities you injure yourself ; and that the absurdities, which you present as the opinions of De Wette, are due not to the author, but to his translator.

Your quotations from De Wette contain nearly *twenty-one* lines ; your translation of those *twenty-one* lines contains *fourteen* errors. Some of these errors pervert the sense of the original ; others are merely ludicrous ; all, such as even a superficial acquaintance with the language might have prevented. A knowledge of German is no merit ; but the want of it in those who undertake to expound German theology is an inconvenience. Your decisions on this subject will, no doubt, be respected by the community, according to their value.

I need not go over these errors individually ; philology is not my present subject ; I will allude to those only which make De Wette assert what he would himself disclaim.

According to your translation, De Wette says, “that the main business of his theological life has been the establishment of the idea, that the es-

sence of what is proposed for religious faith is not in propositions which are *objects of knowledge*, but in a *pious apprehension of things*, purified and enlightened by knowledge."

It is not surprising, that "the shadowy meaning of this sentence should escape in any attempt to grasp it."

De Wette, however, who, for a German, is a singularly perspicuous writer, expresses himself with sufficient clearness in the original. He says that theology has been too much under the influence of scholastic metaphysics; that it has been made to consist in abstract systems of philosophy, rather than in the exposition of religious ideas; and that "its essence is not in *scientific propositions* (wissenschaftlichen Sätzen,) but in the *pious consciousness*, purified and enlightened by the influence of science, (in dem wissenschaftlich gereinigten und erleuchteten frommen Bewusstseyn.)"

To assert that a sound theology should express, in a systematic form, the ideas which are at the foundation of personal religious experience, is very different from saying, "that its essence is not in propositions which are *objects of knowledge*."

You make De Wette say, that "we should not rest the truth of Christian faith, *as if it were a duty to do so*, on common, naked, historical truth."

De Wette actually says, that "we should not rest the truth of Christian faith on common, naked, historical truth, *as if it were a LEGAL TITLE*, (etwa wie ein Recht;") or as he had said a few pages before, "the historical faith of Christians, according to the old system, rests on the Bible, as its source, very much as the common civil law is founded on the *Corpora Juris*." He opposes this literal, mechanical adherence to the words of history, as if they were to be construed with the formal precision of a legal code; and no critical student of the New Testament, I presume, will differ from him in this opinion.

You make De Wette say, that "theology should renounce, what has hitherto been customary, the *poor and unscientific appeal* to miraculous evidence."

De Wette actually says, that "theology should renounce the miserable and unscientific *mode of conducting* the argument from miracles, that has hitherto been usual, (die bisher gewöhnliche so kleinliche und unwissenschaftliche Führung des Wunderbeweises.")

You make him say, that the argument from miracles should be renounced; he actually says, that it should not be conducted in the miserable and unscientific mode that has been usual. The importance of this is deeply felt by many theolo-

gians beside De Wette. Still they value the miracles, when presented in their true light. They would not renounce all appeal to the evidence derived from them. Neither would De Wette. His writings are full of examples to show the power with which the Divinity of Christ is illustrated by his miracles.

You make De Wette say, that "the last office of an improved theology is to make the *might* of the *community of Christians* again effective, and to plant faith in living power in the living life."

De Wette actually says, that "an improved theology should restore the *importance of Christian communion*, (*machte wieder Wichtigkeit der christlichen Gemeinschaft geltend*,) and plant faith in its vital power in actual life, (*in lebendiger Kraft in das lebendige Leben*.)"

The ordinances of the Church have fallen into unmerited neglect; an improved theology would give them a new significance; excite a deeper interest in their observance; and restore them to their place in the concerns of life, and the affections of Christians. This is a favorite idea with De Wette, and one surely which calls for no very severe condemnation.

I ought not, perhaps, to leave this topic, without showing the injustice you have been guilty of,

in classing De Wette with the Naturalist School. To do this, I should need only to adduce passages from almost any one of his writings; but I am spared the task, by the careful and discriminating account of De Wette's theology, which is already before the public in one of our religious Journals.*

I have now expressed some of the thoughts and feelings, which the perusal of your Discourse has awakened. I have used great plainness of speech, for I knew that it was demanded by the cause which I have at heart. If, in any of my remarks, I have been betrayed into a vehemence unsuited to the grave importance of the subject, I beg that it may be ascribed not to zeal for any private opinions, but to a wakeful jealousy for the honor of liberal Christianity, for the rights of Protestant freedom, and for the interests of good learning and a progressive theology. I need not say that I have no desire to impart my own speculative convictions to your mind, or to any other, except so far as they shall appear to be true in the light

* See *Christian Examiner*, vol. xxiv. pp. 137 – 171; vol. xxv. pp. 1 – 23. The author despatches the part of the subject alluded to above with commendable brevity. “Some writers persist in calling De Wette a Naturalist. There is no doctrine that he more strongly opposes than Naturalism.”

of the fullest, freest, and most independent inquiry. A dead level of uniform opinions must be dreaded by every earnest seeker of truth; no man has the whole, but each a part, of reality; and a friendly comparison of ideas from different points of observation, as it is the most delightful mental exercise, is also the most certain means of avoiding error, and of building up a comprehensive faith on a strong foundation. If your Discourse had contained nothing but a manly and temperate defence of your peculiar opinions, however exceptionable they may be, I should not have felt called upon to question their truth; they might safely have been submitted to the judgment of an intelligent community, which is more disposed to examine ideas, than to take them on trust; but when, in your attachment to an uncertain theory, you lose sight of the basis of our Christian union, and advance principles which have been repudiated by our churches, which are at war with the spirit of society among us, and which threaten, if carried into effect, to disorganize and confound our dearest religious institutions, I have found it impossible to keep silence. It seemed to me that, if even the humblest friend of religious freedom should hold his peace, the very stones would cry out.

In regard to the denunciation, towards the close of your Discourse, which you have skilfully couched in the form of a solemn warning or appeal, there is but one opinion, I am sure, which any just mind, that understands its import and application, can cherish. I have only a single remark to offer concerning it. It was out of place. It should have been addressed to the congregations of those "treacherous," "pretended Christian teachers, who disbelieve the divine origin and authority of Christianity, and would undermine the belief of others," since they do not receive Christianity on the evidence which you prescribe as "probable." Sir, those teachers do not acknowledge your authority. If, as you broadly intimate, "the fear of God and the awful realities of the future world" have no influence over them, they cannot be expected "to stop short in their course" at your bidding. They will not obey your commands. You cannot succeed with them. You must go to their congregations. You must appeal to those among whom they live, who know them and who are known of them. You must tell those, in the service of whose souls they have grown gray, that the pastor, who breaks to them the bread of life, is an infidel; that the friend, who has wept with them in their grief, and rejoiced in their joy, is a hypocrite; that the teach-

er, who has directed their inquiries, resolved their doubts, quickened their intellect, given a new impulse to their moral nature, and ever pointed them to the cross of Christ as the hope of the world, is a blind guide, believing nothing himself, and destroying the faith of his flock. If you can persuade their congregations that your exclusive doctrine is correct, they are bound to sever the ties which unite them to their pastors; to surrender the freedom which they have long enjoyed; to return to the old order of things; to cease to judge for themselves the qualifications of their teachers; and to establish a hierarchy, whose parchment and ribbons shall form the credentials of the minister, instead of the "anointing of the Holy Ghost."

Sir, our community of liberal Christians are not prepared for this. I know that individuals may have felt alarm at the progress of thought, and on hearing the utterance of novel opinions have sometimes wondered "whereunto these things would grow." The great body of our people, however, have never been disturbed. They attach little importance to the outcry either of agitators or alarmists. They have no fear of heresy, where thought is left free. They believe that the discussion of opinions is the best antidote to error. Above all, they have an instinctive aversion to the

denouncing of a man's character, on account of his sober and honest convictions. They judge the tree by its fruits. They have long been taught "that goodness consists in being good." It is a doctrine which they approve, and on which they will practise. You will find it hard to persuade them, that a doubtful speculation in theology is essential to the character of the Christian, "that where the pulse of virtue beats in the life, the power of religion is dead at the heart."

I have said, that they do not wish for restrictions on freedom of speech. But this is not all. They desire its actual exercise. They have no respect for the man, who hides his thought. They know too well the value of liberty, lightly to renounce it, for themselves or for their pastors. They wish for no slaves in the pulpit; for no cowards, or sluggards to stand on the watchtower, and look for light. In the general fermentation of modern times, they are aware of the danger of artificial restraints. They know "that the best way to keep things safe is to give them vent." With few exceptions, this is the universal feeling. I have the strongest confidence in the attachment of our community to the first principles of liberal Christianity. When the question is made concerning those principles, almost every man among us, ministers and people, will be found

in his place. They may greatly differ in speculative opinions ; but when the controversy comes to the right of utterance, without fear of denunciation, they are true as steel to this cardinal point. Often have they been tried ; never long found wanting. In the words of one, whom I may not speak of here as the feelings of personal friendship would prompt, they will ever declare, when warned of the peril of freedom of mind and of progress in religion, "our prayer to God is, that it may never stop. We have too much confidence in Providence and in human nature to sympathize with those who

grow pale

Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too
much light.

A spirit is abroad, free, bold, uncompromising, and terrible as an army with banners, which is trying the opinions and institutions of the world as by fire. It is the duty of the wise and good to endeavor to guide this spirit, to restrain its excesses, and above all to imbue it with a sincere and earnest love of truth, humanity, and God. But we fear not the issue. We believe that every occasion of new light and intelligence will be found to illustrate and enforce the evidences of the Christian

revelation, and give mankind a deeper and more living sense of its truth and reality.”

I am, &c.,

AN ALUMNUS OF THE

CAMBRIDGE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

Boston, *September 5, 1839.*

DEFENCE OF "THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY" EXAMINED.

A

SECOND LETTER

TO

MR. ANDREWS NORTON,

OCCASIONED BY HIS DEFENCE OF

A DISCOURSE ON "THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY."

By GEORGE RIPLEY.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

M DCCC XL.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY FREEMAN AND BOLLES,
WASHINGTON STREET.

SPINOZA.



LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

IN a former letter which I addressed to you, I submitted your Discourse on "the latest form of infidelity" to a critical examination. I pointed out the inconsistency of adopting the exclusive principle, in a Discourse before an assembly of liberal clergymen, and maintained the right, which they have always claimed, for each man to decide for himself the speculative belief, which entitles him to bear the name of Christ. I presented a series of arguments from history and scripture, against your assumption that miracles are the only proof of the divine origin of Christianity, and stated several practical objections, under which that theory was believed to labor. In conclusion, I briefly discussed one or two topics of a literary and historical character, and exposed the errors, into which you had fallen, in your notices of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and De Wette.

In the reply to my letter which you have lately published, you attach the principal importance to

the literary questions that I incidentally touched on, and observe that "had the writer confined himself to an examination of your reasoning, you should not have thought that there was any call upon you to take notice of it." (p. 3.) But as "a considerable portion is expressly occupied in charging you with grave errors," "it has seemed to you due to your friends, and to all who may think and feel with you on the great question at issue," "to enter into some explanations." (pp. 3, 4.)

If I were to pass over, without comment, the reasons which you thus advance for continuing the present discussion, I might be understood to acquiesce in their correctness. An individual, undoubtedly, has a perfect right to be governed by those considerations which seem most forcible to his own mind ; provided they do not infringe any rules of moral or social propriety ; no one may presume to call on him for an exposition of his private motives ; but, when he brings them forward, of his own accord, the case is altered, and they become the legitimate subjects of examination and remark.

I must, accordingly, express my dissent from the principle that the defence of personal reputation is more important than the discussion of opinions. It appears to me that our success, as individuals, hardly deserves to be mentioned in comparison with the illustration of a general idea ; the interests

of truth should be made paramount ; our own name subordinate. I do not, of course, object to the repelling of attacks on private character. A delicate sense of honor feels even the breath of suspicion as a stain ; it cannot bear the mere appearance of an unworthy imputation ; and though sure that its brightness cannot be sullied, it condescends to wipe away reproach. But the cause of truth has far higher claims on our best services, than the defence of ourselves, under any circumstances. It is better that we should suffer, than that error should prevail. We owe it to our convictions of truth to make them intelligible to the common mind, to present, without weariness or impatience, the grounds on which they repose, to meet the objections that are alleged against them by the humblest inquirer, and to court the freest scrutiny into their character, as the best means of their support. The opinions which we hold dear should be brought into the clearest light of day ; every argument in relation to them fully considered and sifted ; every sedate and earnest investigation of their claims met with respectful attention ; and no attempt made to hush the voice of objection or doubt, by the exercise of authority. The great topics, which I discussed, in my letter, are worthy the most serious and dispassionate consideration of which our minds are capable. Compared with their solemn and vital impor-

tance, all personal interests are as chaff and dust. They are closely connected with the most valuable hopes of the human soul; they form an essential portion of the influences by which society is affected; the progress of mental culture and the condition of the age depend, in no small measure, on the views that are cherished concerning them; and imperfectly as I may have succeeded in treating them, I am conscious that the most earnest convictions, the most sincere desires for light and truth were brought to their discussion. It would have been a more appropriate course, therefore, it seems to me, if you had distinctly answered the arguments which I brought forward, instead of confining yourself to a consideration of personal charges, as you call them; but which were personal only, so far as they might affect your literary reputation, not as directed against your private character.

Neither can I believe that our duty on a subject of such general and momentous interest as this, is limited "to our friends and those who think with us on the question at issue." Much, no doubt, is due to the claims of sympathy and personal friendship; something, perhaps, to those with whom our principal tie is agreement of opinion; but these claims include but a small part of our obligations. On a subject, which we have brought before the public, I conceive that we are bound to enlighten the

public, as to its merits. We are not authorized to advance opinions, and then pass by the objections they meet with, in silence. We owe it to the community in which we live,—a community that cherishes an hereditary interest in questions relating either to speculative or practical theology,—to stand by our words, and give them the fullest explanation and defence, of which they are susceptible. We have no right to circulate opinions, which agitate many, grieve some, and deeply interest all, and then shrink from their discussion. The attention of our religious public, in particular, within a few years past, has been turned with no ordinary solicitude to the subject treated of in your discourse. The views there presented have been felt to be, in the last degree, untenable ; a more profound conception of the christian revelation, as it seemed, has been embraced by numerous minds ; a strong interest is cherished in the comparison of ideas ; scarcely at any former period have abstract speculations been able to excite such general thought ; and every word spoken from a true and free spirit is sure to meet with an audible response. I can hardly think of the present state of things, without being reminded of the words of Milton. Would that they were still more applicable to us than they are ! “Behold now this city ; a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and sur-

rounded with his protection ; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleagured truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation ; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement." In a condition of society, to which such a description, even by the most remote allusion, is appropriate, the wisest endeavors of every scholar, or thinker, by profession, are constantly due. They are called on for the most gracious sympathies with the whole community. They should freely give of all the light which they have freely received. This cannot be done by diverting public attention from general topics to personal interests. These topics must be met, with manliness, and with temperate zeal. There must be no disguise, no timidity, no bitterness, no exclusiveness. Even those of us, who are deeply sensible of having no claim on the attention of the public, and who would gladly exchange the field of dispute "for the still and quiet air of delightful studies," or the more attractive walks of practical usefulness, are bound to utter the word which it may be given us to speak.

The circle of our friends should be made to embrace every devoted seeker of truth ; we should have regard for those who are at the widest distance from our opinion ; we should seek to save those whom we believe to be wanderers ; we should strive to remove every stumbling-block from the way of the people, to make straight paths for all feet, and thus to prepare the coming of the Lord.

With these views, I cannot but regret, moreover, that you have given a new direction to this controversy, in your remarks on my letter. You have taken it from the people, and given it to scholars. You have confined it to points, in which few take an interest, and neglected those on which the public mind is awake. You have passed by the great theological question, and given your attention to a subordinate literary question.

In pursuing this course, you have shown no small degree of controversial adroitness,—a quality to which I can lay no claim. For, you have removed me from the ground, which we might be supposed to hold with equal advantage, to that on which all the circumstances may be presumed to be in your favor. An individual, whose time is for the most part absorbed in the duties of an engrossing practical occupation, may be expected to wage an unequal contest, on a purely literary sub-

ject, with a scholar by profession. I do not, however, shrink from your call. If I must speak to scholars, rather than to those whom I daily meet, I will not decline the attempt. An appeal to books, as well as to the heart, may not be without fruit; and if I am enabled to gain any advantage in this discussion, it will be owing less to the skill of the advocate, than to the justice of the cause.

The question then turns on the correctness of the account which you have given of the opinions of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and De Wette. This question I am now to consider. I begin with Spinoza.

You spoke of Spinoza as "a celebrated atheist," and asserted that "to deny his atheism is merely to contend that the word is not to be used in its common and established sense." This statement I called in question. I described the system of Spinoza, in the briefest manner, as maintaining the existence of God, the Original and Supreme Cause of the Universe, who, possessing the attribute of intelligence, is not to be confounded with material nature.

In your "Remarks" you observe that "this system has been talked of by many, who apparently have known little concerning it, and mistaken its character." You then say that you shall "endeavor to give a correct account of what alone concerns

us at present, or, indeed, is in itself of much interest,—his conceptions respecting God.” (p. 11.)

This account, which claims to be “correct,” (if not exclusively so,) commences with a statement, in your own words, of the principles contained in the first fifteen propositions of the First Part of his *Ethics*, according to your construction of their sense. As I shall be obliged to subject this account to a rigid analysis, in order to test and exhibit the accuracy, to which it pretends, I will copy such portions of it as demand a special consideration.

“According to Spinoza,” you assert, “there is but one substance existing. This is possessed of infinite attributes. All the phenomena of what we call the created universe, that is, all finite beings, with their properties, acts, and affections; with their moral qualities, good or bad; with their joys and sufferings, are but modifications of the attributes of this sole substance, or, in other words, of this substance itself. This substance has existed from eternity. It could be produced by no other; for one substance cannot produce another;—creation is impossible.” *

The fundamental defect in this part of your account, is the use of the word “substance,” without an explanation of the technical sense which it always

* *Remarks*, pp. 11, 12.

bears in the writings of Spinoza. This is essentially distinct from the meaning attached to it in common discourse. The true signification of this term in the nomenclature of Spinoza is the key to his whole system; and the want of philosophical discrimination which confounds its sense as employed by him, with its sense as employed in popular language, is one of the principal causes, that his conceptions of the Deity have been so often misunderstood. It is the occasion of errors hardly less gross, than would arise from confounding the chemical meaning of the word "spirit," with that which it bears in the Epistles of Paul.

The first definition of the term "substance," as given by Johnson, is "being; something existing; something of which we can say that it is." This expresses, with sufficient accuracy, its common, popular meaning. If used without explanation, it would always be understood in this sense. The most general idea, then, which is attached to the word in ordinary discourse, is "that which exists." Thus we speak of a bright substance, a hard substance, a cold substance, to denote existing things, which possess, respectively, the qualities that are predicated of them. We give the name of "substance" to the matter, which we regard as composing the visible universe. And the idea of matter is so intimately connected with the idea of substance

in the generality of minds, not accustomed to philosophical reasoning, that the expression "immaterial substance" strikes them as a contradiction. Now, if it be stated that, according to a certain system of ontology, one substance only exists, it would be immediately supposed that it admitted the existence of only one thing or object, regarded as constituting the whole of being; and almost every person would infer that by this one substance was meant the material universe. This is the representation which is given by many English writers of the theory of Spinoza. Its correctness is taken for granted by those who have not looked into the subject for themselves. It has been assumed as a point which did not admit of debate; the atheism of Spinoza, grounded on his views of the unity of substance, has long been suggested by the mention of his name; no one, in England or in this country, until recently, has thought of questioning it; and the mere expression of a doubt has been deemed a proof of presumption or eccentricity. The prevailing conception with the partially informed among ourselves, I believe to be, that the one substance which Spinoza considered as God, is the material universe, taken as an unlimited whole, with its infinite variety of phenomena and laws. The sound, and the ordinary signification of the words employed by Spinoza, with the associations which they

call forth, undoubtedly favor this supposition ; else the misconception could not have prevailed to so wide an extent. But if we penetrate to the sense of his system, and confine the meaning of his terms to the definitions which he expressly gives, we shall perceive that nothing can be further from the truth, than the popular traditional opinion concerning its character.

In order, therefore, to obtain a just idea of the meaning of the word "substance," as used by Spinoza, we must comprehend the point of view, from which he started in his inquiries. This was the perception of the limited and dependent character of all finite objects. Every thing, with which the senses are conversant, every thing which we are conscious of within ourselves, bears the stamp of frailty and imperfection. The life of man is a vapor ; the elements of nature are constantly changing their form ; the whole universe is subject to perpetual decay and renovation. Experience makes us acquainted with nothing but transient phenomena ; neither we, nor the objects around us contain an inherent ground of existence ; our frail and finite being does not present its own explanation ; we did not produce ourselves, nor do we depend upon ourselves ; we are exposed to innumerable contingencies, over which we have no control ; like all things in nature, as soon as born, we begin to die ;

our appearance in the transitory forms of space and time was not at our own bidding ; our departure will not be at our own choice.

But this is not all. The results of experience do not exhaust the knowledge of man. He possesses the attribute of reason, which puts him in possession of certain and absolute truth. The inward eye reveals to him an Infinite Being, as the outward eye reveals the finite phenomena of sense. Beyond the changing and dependent existences in time and space, there is an Immutable and Uncaused One, of whom every thing which appears, within the sphere of experience, is an obscure and imperfect manifestation. The worlds, both of matter and of mind, the phenomena both of extension and of thought, are the faint reflections of the Eternal Essence. They correspond to attributes in him which express a portion of the Infinite Perfections of his nature. This Eternal Being, of whose existence we are made certain by the necessity of our reason, and on whom all finite being depends ; the Infinite Cause, which contains the grounds of its existence, within itself ; the Unconditional Reality, which would be, were the universe destroyed, and without which the universe could not exist, or be conceived of, is the God of Spinoza. The term "substance" is applied to this Being, to express his substantial, absolute, independent existence. The term "mode"

is applied to all finite beings, to express their phenomenal, relative, dependent existence, considered as manifestations of the attributes of the Divine Essence. This use of language is not in accordance with its ordinary use. Unless we are capable of laying aside the impressions, which familiar terms produce in our minds, and looking alone at the technical sense in which they are employed, we shall inevitably be led astray. If we construe the peculiar phraseology of Spinoza, in which he labors to express the most sublime, and at the same time, the most abstract conceptions which the human mind can form, into the common language of the market, or even of the schools, we shall not obtain the most distant conception of his lofty reasonings on the universe and on God.

The signification of the word "substance," however, as used by Spinoza, is perfectly plain and easy to be understood. When once apprehended, if distinctly kept in view, it can occasion no difficulty. He adopts the highest meaning attached to it in the philosophy of Descartes, of which he was the pupil; and limits himself to that meaning. "By substance," says Descartes, "we can understand only the thing which exists in such a manner, that it needs no other thing for its existence." "To speak properly, God only is such a being. No created being can exist a single moment without being sustained and preserved by his power. And therefore the word

substance cannot be applied to God and to creatures in the same sense.” *

It appears, then, from what I have now said, that the word “substance,” in the language of Spinoza, means the Self-Existent, Independent Being, that possesses infinite attributes, the ground and the cause of all finite existence ; that the Infinite Being is called “substance” to express his self-existence and independence ; while the word “mode” is applied to every thing relative and dependent, considered as an antithesis, to the Infinite, Self-Existent and Necessary Cause.

This statement may be verified by referring to the following passages.

“I understand by *substance* that which is in itself and is conceived of by means of itself ; that is, that of which a conception may be formed without the conception of any other thing.” †

* “Lorsque nous concevons la substance, nous concevons seulement une chose qui existe en telle façon qu'elle n'a besoin que de soi-même pour exister. En quoi il peut y avoir de l'obscurité touchant l'explication de ce mot, *n'avoir besoin que de soi-même* ; car, à proprement parler, il n'y a que Dieu qui soit tel, et il n'y a aucune chose créée qui puisse exister un seul moment sans être soutenue et conservée par sa puissance. C'est pourquoi on a raison dans l'école de dire que le nom de substance n'est pas *univoque* au regard de Dieu et des créatures.” DESCARTES, *les Principes de la Philosophie, Œuvres*, vol. iii. p. 95, Ed. Cousin.

† “Per substantiam intelligo id, quod in se est et per se concipitur ; hoc est id cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debet.” *Ethica*, pars i., def. iii.

"I understand by *mode* the affections of substance, or that which is in another, by means of which also it is conceived." *

"*Substance* is prior by nature to its affections." †

"Two or more substances of the same nature or attribute cannot exist in the nature of things." ‡

"One substance cannot be produced by another substance." §

A word of explanation may be required here. The reasoning of Spinoza goes to prove not that the infinite, self-existent being cannot produce finite and dependent beings; for this he presently shows is not only possible, but necessary; but that the infinite, self-existent being does not and cannot derive his existence from another previous infinite and self-existent being; or in other words, the purpose of the argument is to demonstrate the absolute unity of God,—a principle to which great importance is attached in his system. This is evident from the next two propositions.

"It belongs to the nature of substance to exist."

"DEMONSTR. Substance cannot be produced

* "Per modum intelligo substantiæ affectiones, sive id, quod in alio est, per quod etiam concipitur." *Ibid.*, def. v.

† "Substantia prior est natura suis affectionibus." *Ibid.*, prop. i.

‡ "In rerum natura non possunt dari duæ, aut plures substantiæ ejusdem naturæ, sive attributi." *Ibid.*, prop. v.

§ "Una Substantia non potest produci ab alia substantia." *Ibid.*, prop. vi.

by any thing else. It is therefore self-caused; that is, its essence necessarily involves existence, or it pertains to its nature to exist." *

"Every substance is necessarily infinite." †

"God, or the substance" (self-existent being) "consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses the eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists." ‡

"Besides God, no substance" (no self-existent being) "can exist or can be conceived of." §

"Hence it follows most clearly that God is one alone, that is, in the nature of things, there is only one substance" (one self-existent being) and "that one absolutely infinite."

"It follows, secondly, that all things of which

* "Ad naturam substantiæ pertinet existere." *Ibid.*, prop. vii.

"DEMONSTR. Substantia non potest produci ab alio; erit itaque causa sui, id est, ipsius essentia involvit necessario existentiam, sive ad ejus naturam pertinet existere."

† "Omnis substantia est necessario infinita." *Ibid.*, prop. viii.

‡ "Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit, necessario existit." *Ibid.*, prop. xi.

§ "Præter Deum nulla dari, neque concipi potest substantia." *Ibid.*, prop. xiv.

"Coroll. I. Hinc clarissime sequitur, Deum esse unicum, hoc est, in rerum natura non, nisi unam substantiam, dari, eamque absolute infinitam esse.

"Coroll. II. Sequitur rem extensam et rem cogitantem, vel Dei attributa esse, vel affectiones attributorum Dei."

extension and thought can be predicated, are either attributes of God, or affections of his attributes."

By an attribute of God, Spinoza understands, any thing which expresses the eternal essence of God, and by the affection or mode of an attribute, that which depends upon the attribute, for its existence and conception. Thought and extension, therefore, or mind and matter, are both manifestations of the eternal essence of God ; the reflection of the invisible, infinite nature.

"Whatever is, is in God, and without God, nothing can be or can be conceived of." *

"God is the efficient cause of every thing which can fall under the infinite intelligence." †

"God is a cause by himself, and not by continuance." ‡

"God is the absolutely first cause." §

"There is no cause, intrinsic or extrinsic, which

* "Quicquid est, in Deo est et nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi potest." *Ibid.*, prop. xv.

† "Sequitur, Deum omnium rerum, quæ sub intellectum infinitum cadere possunt, esse causam efficientem." *Ibid.*, prop. xvi., coroll. i.

‡ "Sequitur Deum causam esse per se, non vero per accidens." *Ibid.*, coroll. ii.

§ "Sequitur Deum esse absolute causam primam." *Ibid.*, coroll. iii.

can excite God to action, except the perfection of his own nature." *

"God alone is a free cause. For God alone exists from the sole necessity of his nature and acts from the sole necessity of his nature." †

"The essence of things produced by God does not involve existence." ‡

"Hence it follows that God is not only the cause that things may begin to exist, but also that they may continue in existence." §

From these quotations, it is evident, in what sense Spinoza uses the word "substance;" and that so far from implying that God does not produce finite objects, "that creation is impossible," he places this idea at the foundation of his system. With many wise metaphysicians of ancient and modern times, he does not understand by creation the production of "something out of nothing;"

* "Sequitur nullam dari causam, quæ Deum extrinsece, vel intrinsece, præter ipsius naturæ perfectionem, incitet ad agendum." *Ibid.*, prop. xvii., coroll. i.

† "Sequitur solum Deum esse causam liberam. Deus enim solus ex sola suæ naturæ necessitate existit, et ex sola suæ naturæ necessitate agit." *Ibid.*, coroll. ii.

‡ "Rerum a Deo productarum essentia non involvit existentiam." *Ibid.*, prop. xxiv.

§ "Hinc sequitur Deum non tantum esse causam, ut res incipiant existere; sed etiam, ut in existendo perseverent." *Ibid.*, coroll.

but the production of the universe, from the infinite fulness of God.

I proceed with the analysis of your account. You continue, "it" (the one substance) "is 'the *immanent* cause of all things, not a *transitive* cause.' These terms are technical and require explanation. An *immanent* cause is that which produces effects only in or upon itself. A *transitive* cause is that which passes out of itself, as it were, to produce or to act on, something else." (p. 12.)

You propose this explanation, solely upon your own authority; you do not attempt to justify it by referring to a single passage of Spinoza; and it cannot be justified from his writings.

You assert that "an *immanent* cause is that which produces effects only in and upon itself." Spinoza, on the contrary, maintains that God, the absolute cause, produces effects that are essentially distinct from himself, considered as the absolute cause. These effects, as we have seen, he calls "modes" of the divine attributes; denoting by this expression the dependence of the effects on the attributes; the divine attributes constituting the essence of God; and the "modes," comprising all the phenomena of finite being, receiving their existence and essence from God. "Mode," he says, "exists in another (*modus in alio est*) by

means of which it must be conceived of; that is, it exists in God alone (in solo Deo est) and can be conceived of by means of God alone." *

The same statement may be presented in a shorter, and perhaps, a more distinct form. According to Spinoza, the infinite substance, (the self-existent God,) is the immanent cause of all things. But there is something beside this infinite substance; namely, its modes; or the effects, which it produces. These modes depend on the infinite substance, as their cause; hence, they are other than the infinite substance; therefore, the infinite substance, or the immanent cause produces something not itself; that is, "all the phenomena of what we call the created universe," or, to use the words of Spinoza, "all that can fall under the cognizance of the infinite intelligence."

Your explanation of the word *immanent* is thus shown to be incorrect, inasmuch as it recognises no distinction between God and the effects which he produces. "But a more total distinction of things" (of the created universe) "from God," as Schelling justly observes, "than is found in Spinoza can scarcely be imagined." God is that one, who exists in himself, and can alone be conceived of by means of himself; but the Finite, is what necessa-

* *Ethica*, pars i. prop. xxiii. Demonstr.

rily exists in another, and can be conceived of only by means of that other. According to this distinction, things are not merely in degree, or through their limitations different from God, but *toto genere*. Whatever, in other respects, be their relation to God, they are absolutely distinguished from him by this circumstance, namely, that they only can be in and after another, that is to say, himself; that the conception of them is derivative, and utterly impossible, without the conception of God; while this on the other hand, is alone self-existent and original, and the ground of every thing else.*

The same reasoning, of course, shows the incorrectness of your explanation of the term *transitive* cause, as you erroneously translate the Latin expression of Spinoza, *causa transiens*, used by him as an antithesis to *causa immanens*. You assert that "a transitive cause is that which passes out of itself, as it were, to produce, or to act on something else." But, according to Spinoza, the infinite substance does produce something beside itself; namely, its modes; which depend on it; and therefore are other than it; that is, all the phenomena of finite being.

I will now give the true explanation of these terms, as used in the writings of Spinoza. It was

* See SCHELLING's *Philosophische Untersuchungen über Freiheit*, in *Philosophische Schriften*, p. 404, 405.

his purpose to show the intimate and indissoluble union which exists between God and the universe. To express this idea, he says, "that God is the *immanent* cause, but not the *transient* cause of all things." By an "immanent cause," he means that which remains within the effect it produces. By a "transient cause," he means that which passes out from the effect it produces. This idea is sufficiently obvious, but it may be worth while to illustrate it by a familiar example. The torch, which kindles a fire, produces its effect, and then its agency ceases. It is a *transient* cause. The sun, which produces a bright reflection in a mirror, continues its agency on the effect. It is an *immanent* cause.

The correctness of this explanation is evident from the passage in which the proposition is demonstrated.

"God is the immanent cause of all things, not the transient cause."

"**DEMONSTR.** All things which are, are in God, and must be conceived of by means of God, and therefore, God is the cause of things which are in him. Which is the first point. Then, no substance" (no self-existent being) "can exist out of God, that is, nothing which is in itself out of God. Which was the second." *

* "Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens; non vero transiens."

The same idea is illustrated by the passage in the Epistles, in which the expression occurs. Replying to the objection that he regarded God and nature as one and the same, and showing that this was not the fact, Spinoza says, "I maintain that God is the immanent and not the transient cause of all things. All things are in God and move in God; this I affirm with Paul, and perhaps also with all the ancient philosophers, although not in their sense; and I might even say, with all the ancient Hebrews, as far as can be conjectured from certain traditions, although variously corrupted." *

It is hardly necessary that I should present the only sense, as it appears to me, in which an intelligent student of Spinoza can understand these passages. Still, as some may be misled by the brevity, and perhaps also, by a slight verbal ambiguity in the reasoning, it may be well to state, what I consider the correct construction.

"DEMONSTR. Omnia, quæ sunt, in Deo sunt et per Deum concipi debent, adeoque Deus rerum, quæ in ipso sunt est causa; quod est primum. Deinde extra Deum nulla potest dari substantia, hoc est, res, quæ extra Deum in se sit. Quod erat secundum." *Ethica*, pars i. prop. xviii.

* "Deum enim rerum omnium causam immanentem, ut ajunt, non vero transeuntem statuo. Omnia, inquam, in Deo esse et in Deo moveri cum Paulo affirmo et forte etiam cum omnibus antiquis Philosophis, licet alio modo; et auderem etiam dicere cum antiquis omnibus Hebræis, quantum ex quibusdam traditionibus, tametsi multis modis adulteratis, conjicere licet." *Epistola xxi.*

According to Spinoza, God is the Infinite Being who filleth and sustaineth all things. They depend on him for their essence and their existence; they cannot even be conceived of without him; they dwell in him and he in them. Hence he is the *causa immanens*, the indwelling and permanent cause. But further, out of God, there is no self-existent object; nothing but God has or can have life or being in itself; therefore the agency which first produced all things ever pervades and preserves them; hence, God is not the *causa transiens*, the transient and temporary cause.

Having thus shown the incorrectness of your explanation of these terms, I may as properly here as in any other place, notice your remarks on my translation. The rendering, which you propose, is no more intelligible than the original, without a commentary. The commentary, which you furnish, as has been seen, is erroneous. The translation of *transiens* by "transitive" is open to criticism, on the score of philology, but I do not wish to be detained by small verbal niceties. I proceed to your objections.

I translate the passage, "*Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens; non vero transiens,*" as follows. "God is the permanent and indwelling cause of all things; not the transient and temporary cause."

You assert, 1. that I have "inserted two epithets

in my translation, not in the original ;” 2. that “by translating *immanens*, ‘indwelling,’ its essential meaning is changed ;” 3. that “a common acquaintance with the Latin language, as one would think, might have prevented my giving ‘transient,’ as the meaning of *transiens* ;” 4. “that these additional epithets are as little to be found in the 21st of Spinoza’s Epistles, from which also I profess to quote them ;” and 5. “that the same fundamental error appears not only in my professed rendering from the Latin of Spinoza, but in a professed translation from the German ;” which last circumstance, you add, “you cannot account for.”*

I will consider these assertions in their order.

1 and 2. The Latin word *immanens* is composed of the preposition *in* and the participle *manens*. It means literally, “remaining in,” or, “indwelling.” As used by Spinoza, in its application to the Supreme Cause of the universe, it means that which remains within its effect and does not pass away from it. It includes the two ideas of inherence and of permanence. I know of no one English word which fully expresses these two ideas. The words “permanent” and “indwelling” do express them both ; they exhaust the meaning of *immanens*, as used by Spinoza ; and at the same time, they ex-

* *Remarks*, pp. 21, 22.

plain it to those not familiar with his philosophical terms. Accordingly, I considered, and still consider this the best translation that can be made of the word. There is no principle of criticism which forbids the translation of one foreign word into two or more equivalent English words. On the contrary, we are bound to do so, whenever, as in the present case, the occasion requires it. To speak of this as an "interpolation," is an incorrect use of language.

3. The word *transiens* means literally "passing over," or "passing away." As used by Spinoza, denying its application to the Supreme Cause of the universe, it means that which passes away from the effect it produces. It includes the two ideas of passing from, and of temporary duration. No English word occurs to me which so distinctly expresses these ideas, as not to make another epithet necessary when one aims at perspicuity on an obscure subject. The words "transient" and "temporary" are the most suitable that I know of to express the sense of the original; although they are too nearly synonymous to be used together, except when very delicate shades of thought are to be discriminated, and great precision is essential.

Taking into view the antithetical character of the sentence; having established the meaning of *immanens* as "permanent and indwelling;" I cannot satisfy myself that the opposite idea of *transiens*

can be better exhibited than by the words "transient and temporary" which I have used.

4. The original expressions in the twenty-first of Spinoza's epistles are the same with those in the Ethics which I translated. I, accordingly, gave them the same translation.

5. The German writer, Krug, from whom I quote, introduces the Latin words of Spinoza, in a German form,—a very common transaction in that language. "Ist Gott die *immanente* oder die *transeunte* Ursache der Welt?" Is God the immanent or the transient cause of the universe? Believing the correct translation of these technical terms to be that which I had already given, of course, I must have translated them in what I considered the only correct way wherever they occurred. Had I done otherwise, I should not have been able "to account for it" myself.

In the above remarks, I have vindicated the correctness of my translation, by pointing out its agreement with the meaning of Spinoza, as inferred from his own statements of his philosophical system.

It remains to say a very few words, in regard to your philological strictures. "A common acquaintance with the Latin language," you remark, "might not have prevented the writer from rendering *immanens* by 'indwelling.'" So it might be sup-

posed; "indwelling" being the most literal translation of *immanens*, that our language is capable of; your remark is perfectly just.

But you continue, "a common acquaintance with the Latin language, might, one would think, have prevented his giving 'transient' as the meaning of *transiens*." This I am not prepared to admit without a little consideration. At present, I cannot but think it must be "an uncommon" acquaintance with the Latin language, which would lead one to deny the exactness of the translation in question.

The word "transient," according to the first two definitions of Johnson, who also gives *transiens* as the original term from which it is derived, means, "soon past; soon passing." It was in this sense that I made use of it. The question is whether the Latin word *transiens* admits of this rendering. You do not inform us on what grounds you deny this. I cannot conjecture the reason, except that you may suppose that *transeo* in Latin is used exclusively as an active verb. It is true, that it often bears an active signification, and in "Ainsworth's Abridgment" is represented as exclusively an active verb. This is an error which might easily be corrected even from the references there made. The following passages contain examples of its use in the sense of "passing away." I submit them, with diffidence, as I know not whether you will

allow Cicero and Seneca to be any better authorities on a question of Latin philology, than are, in your opinion, Tennemann, Krug, Cousin, and others, whom I quoted, on the history of philosophy.

“Cum legis dies *transierit*.” Cicero, Att. Epist. lib. vii. 7.

“When the day of the law shall have *passed by*.”

“At si tardus eris, errabis; *transiit* ætas

Quam cito.” Tibullus, lib. i. eleg. iv. v. 27.

“But if you delay, you will err; how quickly *passes away* the season of life.”

“Sic cum *transierint* mei

Nullo cum strepitu dies

Plebeius moriar senex.” Seneca, Thyest., 398.

“So when my days shall have *passed away* without noise, I shall die a plebeian old man.”

“Fratrem juvat videre; complexus mihi

Redde expetitos, quidquid irarum fuit,

Transierit.” Seneca, *ibid.*, 509.

“It pleases me to see my brother; give me the desired embrace, and whatever anger was felt will *have passed away*.”

In the above statements, I have vindicated the correctness of my translation, by pointing out its agreement with the meaning of Spinoza, as inferred from his writings, and its support from authentic classical usage.

It is almost superfluous to add, that the usual

translations of the phrase, which I have happened to meet with, are at variance with the explanation that you propose; and express the same sense, with that which I have given,—an act which you have ventured to brand as a moral offence.

A few examples which I have turned to, since I read your criticism,—and some of which having been long familiar, no doubt, influenced my choice of epithets,—may perhaps serve to relieve the tediousness of this discussion.

MR. HALLAM. This author, in the fourth volume of his “History of Literature,” which has just come into my hands, translates the phrase as follows. “God is the *permanent*, but not the *transient* cause of all things.” *

It will be perceived that Mr. Hallam, as well as myself, has “inserted the epithet ‘permanent’ which is not in the original,” and that “a common acquaintance with the Latin language did not prevent him from giving ‘transient’ as the meaning of *transiens*.” This is the more remarkable, as he bears as distinguished a reputation for classical learning as almost any man in England, and is certainly not liable to be misled by any prejudice in favor of Spinoza.†

* HALLAM’S *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, vol. iv. p. 248.

† In quoting Mr. Hallam’s translation of this passage, in defence

As the Germans, however, more than any other scholars have made Spinoza an object of study, it is to their writings that we must look for the most frequent translations of the passage. I will give some instances from works which chance to be at hand.

RIXNER. "God is the *permanent*, not the *transient* cause of all things; because all things, not only in their existence, but also in their essence are determined through his own divine existence and essence." *

of my own, I shall not be understood as admitting the correctness of his account of Spinoza's system. It is the exposition of an accomplished man of letters, rather than of a sagacious metaphysician. The following example may serve as an illustration of the danger of trusting to literary research on subjects which cannot be comprehended without the most subtile thought, and a natural turn for abstract speculation.

Mr. Hallam, in giving Spinoza's definition of "mode," says, "the mode of a substance is its accident or affection, by means of which it is conceived;" thus making the conception of substance depend on its accident; whereas the contrary doctrine is the foundation of the system. Mr. Hallam's error arose from a slight verbal ambiguity in Spinoza's Latin, which could not mislead, for a moment, one familiar with his principles. Spinoza's words are "per modum intelligo substantiæ affectiones, sive id, quod in alio est, per quod etiam concipitur." "By mode, I understand the affections of substance, or that which exists in another, by means of which also it is conceived." See vol. iv. p. 245.

* "Er est also die *immerwährende* (immanente), nicht *vorübergehende* Ursache aller Dinge; weil alle Dinge nicht nur in ihrer Exist-

TIEDEMANN. "The cause *dwelling* in things." *

HERDER. "Spinoza calls the self-subsistent Being, a not *transient*, but the *permanent*, immanent cause of all things." †

KRAUSE. "God is the absolutely first cause, which subsists in and for itself, the *indwelling* not the *transient*" (literally, not the passing over and through) "ground of all finite things." ‡

FRANCKE. "Spinoza asserts the existence of an *indwelling* cause of the world." §

HEYDENREICH. "The cause of the world, not as *transient*, but as *indwelling*." ||

enz, sondern auch ihrer Wesenheit nach durch seine eigne göttliche Existenz und Wesenheit bestimmt sind." RIXNER's *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. iii. p. 62.

* "Die in den Dingen *wohnende* Ursache." TIEDEMANN's *Geist der spekulativen Philosophie*, vol. vi. p. 234.

† "Spinoza das selbständige Wesen eine nicht-*vorübergehende*, sondern die *bleibende* immanente Ursache aller Dinge nennet." HERDER's *Gespräche über Spinoza's System*, Werke, vol. ix. p. 137.

‡ "Gott ist die absolute erste, an und für sich bestehende Ursache, der *innenbleibende* (immanente) nicht der *über-und hindurchgehende* (transiente) Grund aller endlichen Dinge." KRAUSE's *Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft*, p. 333.

§ "Spinoza behauptet das Daseyn einer *inwohnenden* Weltursache." FRANCKE, *ueber die Schicksale des Spinozismus*, p. 22.

|| "Die Ursache der Welt nicht als *vorübergehend*, sondern als *inwohnend*." HEYDENREICH's *Natur und Gott nach Spinoza*, vol. i. p. 44.

JÄSCHE. "God is the immanent, but not the external, *transient* cause of all things." * †

I will add the only example of a French translation that I can call to mind.

LERMINIER, (Professor in the *Collège de France*.) "Nothing exists but in God, or can be conceived of without God; therefore God, is the *permanent* and not the *transient* cause of all things. God the ever present cause of the world, dwells in his work as in a tabernacle." ‡

* "Gott ist die immanente, nicht aber die äussere *vorübergehende* Ursache aller Dingen." JÄSCHE's *Der Pantheismus*, vol. ii. p. 224.

† I do not apprehend that any one will deny that "transient" is the correct translation of the German word, *vorübergehend*. Neither did I apprehend that any one would maintain that "transitive" was a more correct translation than "transient" of the Latin word *transiens*. I therefore make these references to the dictionaries.

"TRANSIENT, (*transiens*), *vorübergehend*, *verganglich*," &c.

"TRANSITIVE, *übergehend*." BAILEY-FAHRENKRÜGER's *English and German Dictionary*.

"TRANSIENT, *vorübergehend*," &c.

"TRANSITIVE, *übergehend*," &c. *Flügel's English and German Dictionary*.

"VORÜBERGEHEN, *to pass by, to go on, to go forward*." KÜTTNER AND NICHOLSON's *deutsch-englisches Wörterbuch*.

‡ "Rien n'existe que dans Dieu et ne peut être conçu sans Dieu; (et nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi potest;) donc Dieu est la cause permanente et non passagère de toutes choses. (Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens, nec vero transiens.) Dieu, cause toujours présente du monde, habite dans son ouvrage comme dans un tabernacle." LERMINIER, *Philosophie du Droit*, vol. ii. p. 147.

If the defence of my translation be sound,—and I have endeavored to give every reader the materials for deciding whether it be so or not,—it will be seen, by your own admission, that the charge of atheism against Spinoza cannot be sustained. For you observe, that the proposition which I have quoted from him, and which forms an essential principle in his system, namely, “that God is the the permanent and indwelling cause of all things, not the transient and temporary cause,” is one which “no Christian theist will controvert.” †

I proceed with my analysis. “To this substance,” you observe, “considered in itself, distinct from the effects produced by it in itself, and as the cause of those effects, he gives the name also of *Natura naturans*, which may be explained by the equivalent term, *causal* Nature; while to the modifications produced by it in itself, that is, to the phenomena of the universe, he gives the name of *Natura naturata*, for which we may substitute *phenomenal* Nature.

“To this substance considered in itself, to his *Natura naturans*, that is, to his God, *regarded as the cause of all things*, he expressly denies both intellect and will, and argues at length against

† *Remarks*, p. 21.

ascribing them to God. 'I will show' he says, 'that neither intellect nor will belong to the nature of God.' " *

In order to reconcile this statement, with the fact which you admit, that Spinoza "repeatedly speaks of the intellect of God," you continue, thus; "All nature, the universe considered as an effect consists only of infinite modifications of the one infinite substance, the God of Spinoza. But whatever may be affirmed of the modifications of any being may be affirmed of that being itself. *Phenomenal nature* (*Natura naturata*) is equally God as *causal Nature*. Now in the infinite universe there is infinite thought and intellect, and a knowledge or understanding of God (for according to Spinoza, there is nothing else to be known or understood but God;) and all this may be predicated of God, considered not as a cause, but as *phenomenal Nature*."

The considerations which show the incorrectness of this statement may be made plain, I trust, to every clear mind.

The terms *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata* are used in the scholastic philosophy to express conceptions that are quite foreign to our modern habits of thought. According to those conceptions,

* *Remarks*, pp. 12, 13.

all existence was considered as a whole. The idea of unity was predominant over that of variety. The universe was contemplated in its undivided integrity; not as broken into fragments by the power of modern analysis. Hence, the term Nature was applied to every thing that exists, including both the creation and the Creator. But in this view of Nature, regarded as a whole, a fundamental distinction was recognised. God and the universe, as we have seen, were comprehended in the general conception, expressed by the word Nature. The contrast between God and the universe was, therefore, to be preserved in thought and indicated by language. Hence the terms *Natura naturans* were applied to God, considered as the Creator of the universe, and *Natura naturata* to the universe, considered as the sum total of created things.*

Now Spinoza adopts these terms, but with the sharpest and most precise limitation of their sense.

* "NATURARE, creare, res naturales condere, iis naturam donare, verbum est Theologorum Scholasticorum, quibus Deus dicitur *Natura naturans*, non *Natura naturata*, id est, auctor naturæ seu omnium in rerum natura constantium, non *Natura naturata*, seu res creata, ab alio condita, constituta." DU CANGE, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*.

"NATURARE, to create, to establish natural things, to give a nature to them, is a word of the scholastic theologians, by whom God is called *Natura naturans*, that is, the author of nature, or of all things existing in the nature of things, not *Natura naturata*, or a created thing, established, constituted by another."

“By *Natura naturans*,” says he, “we should understand that which exists in itself and is conceived of by means of itself, or such attributes of substance” (of the self-existent being) “as express the eternal and infinite essence, that is, God so far as he is considered as a free cause. But by *naturata*, I understand every thing which proceeds from the necessity of the nature of God, or of any one of the attributes of God, that is, all the modes of the attributes of God, so far as they are considered as things, which exist in God, and which without God can neither exist, nor be conceived of.” *

The correct translation of these terms, according to the explanation of Spinoza, is *absolute Nature*, and *relative Nature*.

Absolute Nature is God, considered as the independent cause of all things; or those attributes of God, which may be conceived of in themselves, without involving the idea of any thing back of them as their ground.

Relative Nature is any modification of a divine attribute, which cannot be conceived of in itself, but involves the idea of something back of it as its ground.

Thus, causality in God belongs to absolute Nature, because it can be conceived of without refer-

* *Ethica*, pars i. prop. xxix. scholium. The Latin of Spinoza is quoted in the *Remarks*, p. 13. but not translated.

ence to any thing back of it, but expresses his infinite and eternal essence. Every *act of causality* belongs to relative Nature, because it cannot be conceived of, without reference to something back of it ; namely, the absolute causality which belongs to the infinite and eternal essence of God.

The same idea may be illustrated by reference to more familiar conceptions. As Christian theists, we suppose that *justice* belongs to the infinite and eternal essence of God, and that it is manifested in particular *acts* of justice towards the universe. This conception would be expressed in the phraseology of Spinoza as follows. *Justice* belongs to *absolute* Nature, because it can be conceived of without reference to any thing back of it, but expresses the infinite and eternal essence of God. Every particular *act* of justice belongs to *relative* Nature, because it cannot be conceived of without reference to something back of it ; namely, the absolute justice which belongs to the infinite and eternal essence of God. If we wished to unfold the conception still further, and to express the idea that *every act of justice*, whether in God or man, whether infinite or finite, presupposed the existence of absolute justice, we should say, that justice, considered *as an act*, whether infinite or finite, belonged to relative Nature, not to absolute Nature ; since there can be no conception of an act of justice, without the previous con-

ception of justice in itself. The existence of absolute justice is implied in the existence of every act of justice, but absolute justice belongs only to the infinite and eternal essence of God; and is therefore to be referred to absolute Nature; while every act of justice, which implies absolute justice back of it, is, of course, to be referred to relative Nature.

A similar analysis might be applied to other common conceptions of the attributes of God. We might say, in the phraseology of Spinoza, that love, wisdom, and goodness, considered as acts, whether in the infinite or the finite intelligence, belonged to relative Nature, not to absolute Nature. For we can conceive of absolute love, absolute wisdom, or absolute goodness, in itself, without reference to any thing back of it, as expressing the infinite and eternal essence of God. But we cannot conceive of any act of love, wisdom, or goodness, without the previous conception of love, wisdom, or goodness, in itself. The existence of any act of love, wisdom, or goodness, implies the existence of absolute love, wisdom, or goodness, and therefore is to be referred to relative Nature.

Now applying this mode of reasoning to his own conceptions, Spinoza maintains that *absolute thought* in God belongs to absolute Nature, because it can be conceived of without reference to any thing back of it, but expresses his infinite and

eternal essence. Every *act of intelligence*, on the other hand, belongs to *relative Nature*, because it can neither exist, nor be conceived of without implying the existence of something back of it; namely, the absolute thought, which belongs to the infinite and eternal essence of God. Spinoza, moreover, maintains that every *act of intelligence*, whether in the *infinite* or the *finite* mind implies the existence of something back of it; namely, the *absolute thought* which belongs to the infinite and eternal essence of God.

This statement is contained in the following proposition.

“Intelligence *as an act*, whether it be finite or infinite, as also, will, desire, love, and so forth, must be referred to *relative Nature*, not to *absolute Nature*.

“DEMONSTR. For by intelligence, as is evident of itself, we do not understand ABSOLUTE THOUGHT, but only a certain mode of thinking, which mode differs from other modes, as desire, love, and so forth, and therefore must be conceived of by means of absolute thought; that is to say, it must be so conceived of, by means of SOME ATTRIBUTE OF GOD, which expresses the ETERNAL AND INFINITE ESSENCE OF THOUGHT, that without it, it can neither exist, nor be conceived of; and therefore,

must be referred to relative Nature, not to absolute Nature, as also other modes of thinking." *

We thus perceive that the very proposition which is brought to show that Spinoza denied intelligence to God, expressly asserts that fact; that he maintained the dependence of every act of intelligence on the absolute thought of God; that no mode of thinking could exist or be conceived of, except on the supposition of the eternal and infinite thought, which is an essential attribute of the divine nature; and therefore, intelligence considered as an act, not the absolute thought of God, must be referred to *relative* Nature, not to *absolute* Nature.

The assertion that intelligence is denied to God, considered as a cause, is, if possible, still more clearly set aside by the following statements of Spinoza.

* "Intellectus *actu*, sive is finitus sit, sive infinitus, ut et voluntas, cupiditas, amor, etc. ad Naturam naturatam; non vero ad naturantem referri debet,

"DEMONSTR. Per intellectum enim (ut per se notum) non intelligimus ABSOLUTAM COGITATIONEM, sed certum tantum modum cogitandi, qui modus ab aliis, scilicet cupiditate, amore, etc. differt, adeoque per absolutam cogitationem concipi debet, nempe per ALIQUOD DEI ATTRIBUTUM, quod ÆTERNAM ET INFINITAM COGITATIONIS ESSENTIAM exprimit, ita concipi debet, ut sine ipso nec esse, nec concipi possit; ac propterea ad Naturam naturatam, non vero naturantem referri debet, ut etiam reliqui modi cogitandi." *Ethica*, pars. i. prop. xxxi.

“The formal being of ideas has” (*agnoscit*, literally, *owns*) “God for its cause, so far only as he is considered as a thinking being, and not so far as he is manifested by another attribute. That is, the ideas of the attributes of God, as well as of individual things, have not the objects of the ideas, or the things perceived for their efficient cause; but God himself, so far as he is a thinking being.” *

“In God, the idea necessarily exists, both of his own essence and of all things which necessarily proceed from his essence.

“DEMONSTR. For God can think of infinite objects in infinite modes, or form the idea of his own essence and of all things which necessarily proceed from it.” †

I cannot easily imagine a more explicit assertion of the self-consciousness, and of course, the intelligence of God, considered as the cause of all things.

* “Esse formale idearum Deum, quatenus tantum ut res cogitans consideratur, pro causa agnoscit et non, quatenus alio attributo explicatur. Hoc est, tam Dei attributorum, quam rerum singularium ideæ non ipsa ideata, sive res perceptas pro causa efficiente agnoscunt; sed ipsum Deum, quatenus est res cogitans.” *Ethica*, pars ii. prop. v.

† “In Deo, datur necessario idea, tam ejus essentiæ, quam omnium, quæ ex ipsius essentia necessario sequuntur.

“DEMONSTR. Deus enim infinita infinitis modis cogitare, sive ideam suæ essentiæ et omnium, quæ necessario ex ea sequuntur, formare potest.” *Ibid.*, pars ii. prop. iii.

It is not met by saying that it alludes to the ideas of the Infinite, which exist in the aggregate of finite minds. For this supposition is contradicted by the following passages.

“The idea of God, from which infinite effects proceed in infinite modes can be only one.

“**DEMONSTR.** For the infinite intelligence comprehends nothing but the attributes of God, and his affections,” (modes or manifestations). “But God is one. Therefore the idea of God, from which infinite effects proceed in infinite modes, must be only one.” *

If the idea which God has of his own essence, be merely a compound of the ideas of finite minds, according to Spinoza, it is plain that he could never have maintained a proposition like that now quoted. But he makes the distinction between the finite mind and the infinite mind, still more clear in a passage taken from another part of his writings.

“The mind,” (the human mind) “can imagine nothing, nor remember past events, except as long as the body lasts.”

* “*Idea Dei, ex qua infinita infinitis modis sequuntur, unica tantum esse potest.*

“**DEMONSTR.** Intellectus infinitus nihil, præter Dei attributa ejusque affectiones, comprehendit. Atqui Deus est unicus. Ergo idea Dei, ex qua infinita infinitis modis sequuntur, unica tantum esse potest.” *Ibid.*, par ii. prop. iv.

“But in God the idea necessarily exists, which expresses the essence of this or that human body in an eternal form.

“DEMONSTR. God is not only the cause of the existence of this or that human body, but also of its essence ; which therefore must necessarily be conceived of by means of the essence of God ; and that by a certain eternal necessity ; which conception must necessarily exist in God.” *

I have thus shown that the limitation of thought to the aggregate of thinking beings, considered as *phenomenal* Nature, to use your expression, is contradicted by specific passages in the writings of Spinoza.

I will now sum up what has been said, in the form of a general demonstration.

According to Spinoza, the attributes of God express or manifest his infinite and eternal essence. But that pertains to the essence of any thing, which being given, the thing is necessarily supposed, and

* “Mens nihil imaginari potest, neque rerum præteritarum recordari, nisi durante corpore.” *Ibid.*, pars v. prop. xxi.

“In Deo tamen datur necessario idea, quæ hujus et illius corporis humani essentiam sub æternitatis specie exprimit.

“DEMONSTR. Deus non tantum est causa hujus et illius corporis humani existentia, sed etiam essentia, quæ propterea per ipsam Dei essentiam necessario debet concipi, idque æterna quadam necessitate, qui quidem conceptus necessario in Deo dari debet.” *Ibid.*, pars v. prop. xxii.

which being taken away the thing is necessarily destroyed ; or that, without which the thing, and *vice versa*, which without the thing, can neither exist, nor be conceived of. But thought is an attribute of God, or God is a thinking being. Hence, thought is an attribute which pertains to the infinite and eternal essence of God ; but the infinite and eternal essence of God is the cause of the universe, and therefore thought which pertains to the essence of God, pertains to him considered as the cause of the universe.

After the explanation, which I have now given, the errors in this portion of your account of Spinoza's system will be obvious to every attentive reader. Perhaps, however, I might fail of being universally understood, if I neglected to briefly indicate them. I will accordingly point them out in a body, and close the discussion of this topic.

1. You assert, (p. 15.) that according to Spinoza, "whatever may be affirmed of the modifications of any being may be affirmed of that being itself." This is not correct. Spinoza affirms that the modifications of the infinite, self-existent being are relative, depending for their essence and their existence on something back of them, without which they cannot even be conceived of. He affirms, on the contrary, that the infinite self-existent being is ab-

solute, the cause of the essence and the existence of all things, and necessary to their being conceived of.

2. You assert (ib.) that according to Spinoza, "phenominal Nature (*Natura naturata*) is equally God as causal Nature." This is not correct. Causal Nature, (to adopt your translation for a moment,) according to Spinoza, is the absolute self-existent God, the sole cause of the universe, on which all things ever depend. Phenomenal Nature is relative, depending for existence on God, and cannot be conceived of without him.

3. You assert (ib.) that according to Spinoza, "there is infinite thought and intellect in the infinite universe, and a knowledge or understanding of God; and that all this may be predicated of God, considered not as a cause, but as phenomenal Nature." This is not correct. Spinoza declares in the demonstration of the very proposition which you quote, that every act of intellect which is predicated of phenomenal Nature, presupposes the eternal and infinite essence of thought, as an attribute of God, considered as causal Nature.

4. You assert, (ib.) that according to Spinoza, "*actual intellect* must be referred to phenomenal Nature, not to causal Nature." This is not correct. Spinoza maintains that intellect, considered as an act, must be referred to phenomenal Nature, not to

causal Nature. The meaning of this statement we have already seen. Your error proceeds from a mistranslation of the words *intellectus actu*, which you render "actual intellect;" while they signify "intellect as an act." If the original Latin had been quoted here, as it is in many other parts of your account, your readers might instantly have detected the error for themselves.* †

* A writer familiar with Spinoza's use of language could not have translated the words *intellectus actu*, by "actual intellect." Spinoza often has occasion to express the idea of actual existence, but I do not recollect an instance in which he employs the word *actu*, by itself, for that purpose. On the other hand, I could produce more examples than would be likely to be read, of other expressions, such as *actuosus*, *actualis*, *actu existentis*, which, as far as I know, he always uses to signify "actual." I will give a few of them.

"Dei potentiam nihil esse, præterquam Dei *actuosam* essentiam." *Ethica*, pars. ii. prop. iii. schol.

"The power of God is nothing, beside the *actual* essence of God."

"Dei cogitandi potentia æqualis est ipsius *actuali* agendi potentiae." *Ibid.*, pars. ii. prop. vii. coroll.

"The power of thinking in God is equal to his *actual* power of acting."

"Primum, quod *actuale* mentis humanæ esse constituit, nihil aliud est, quam idea rei alicujus singularis *actu existentis*." *Ibid.*, pars. ii. prop. xi.

"The first thing, which constitutes the *actual* being of the human mind, is nothing else than the idea of some individual thing, *actually existing*."

"Conatus, quæ unaquæque res in suo esse perseverare conatur, nihil est præter ipsius rei *actualem* essentiam." *Ibid.*, pars. iii. prop. vii.

5. You convey the idea, by using the words "actual intellect," that Spinoza denies absolute

"The endeavor, by which each thing strives to continue in its being is nothing beside the *actual* essence of the thing."

"Mens *actualem* corporis existentiam involvit." *Ibid.*, pars iii. prop. xi. schol.

"The mind involves the *actual* existence of the body."

† The remark of Spinoza "not that I allow the supposition of any *potential* intellect" is brought into the account from a scholium, as if it were used in antithesis to "actual intellect." This is an error. To ascribe *potential* intellect to the Deity, is to ascribe to him the possibility of becoming intelligent at some future time. But this is a trifling proposition. Spinoza surely never was at the pains to deny it. His words are, "ratio, cur hic loquar de intellectu actu, non est, quia concedo, ullum dari intellectum potentia." "The reason why I here speak of intelligence as an act, is not that I admit intelligence as a power."

The meaning of this expression is evident from parallel passages in his writings. He regarded power, intelligence, and existence, as forming an absolute unity in the infinite essence of God. The intelligence of God, in his view, is not one thing and the power of intelligence another, but the power of God and the intelligence of God are God himself. "The power of God is the very essence of God." "Dei potentia est ipsa ipsius essentia." Pars. i. prop. xxxiv.

In this opinion, Spinoza did not suppose that he differed widely from other philosophers. "For all the philosophers," says he, "whom I have seen, admit that God has no intelligence as a power, but only as an act; and since his intelligence and will are not distinguished from his essence, as even all concede," and so forth. "Deinde omnes, quos vidi, philosophi concedunt, nullum in Deo dari intellectum potentia, sed tantum actu; cum autem et ejus intellectus et ejus voluntas ab ejusdem essentia non distinguantur, uti etiam omnes concedunt." Pars. i. prop. xxxiii. schol. ii.

intelligence to God, considered as the cause of the universe, while Spinoza himself in the words which immediately follow your quotation, and which make an essential part of it, declares that this is not his meaning. This is not correct. For, by thus giving an erroneous translation of the words which you quote, and omitting to quote the passage in which

This conception may be explained also by referring to Spinoza's account of the philosophy of Descartes (Appendix), which, though it is not to be taken as a proof of his later opinions, may serve to illustrate his mode of reasoning. "Will and power, considered externally, are not distinguished from the intelligence of God, as is plain from what has been said;—from which we clearly perceive that the intelligence of God and his power, and the will, with which he created, knew, and preserves or loves created things, are in no way to be distinguished in themselves, but only in relation to our thought." "*Voluntas et potentia, quoad extra non distinguuntur a Dei intellectu, ut jam satis ex antecedentibus constat;—ex quibus, clare et distincte percipimus, intellectum Dei, ejusque potentiam, et voluntatem, qua res creatas creavit, intellexit, et conservat, sive amat, nullo modo inter se distingui, sed tantum respectu nostræ cogitationis.*" *Opera*, vol. i. p. 121.

The same conception may be found expressed by other writers. "The power of God is not any thing different from God, but is the Almighty himself." BROWN'S *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, p. 126.

"God is infinitely intelligent, infinitely powerful, infinitely good; his intelligence, his will, his power, are really but one and the same thing; that which thinks in him is the same which wills; that which acts, which has power, and which does every thing is precisely the same which thinks and which wills;—in a word, in him every thing is of a supreme unity." FENELON, *L'existence de Dieu*, part. ii. chap. v. p. 235. (Paris, 1822.)

the words are explained, you make Spinoza assert the very doctrine which he denies. You say that, according to him, no "actual intellect can be ascribed to God, as the cause of the universe," whereas he says, that no act of intellect can be or can be conceived of, except on the supposition of absolute thought; that is, the attribute of God which expresses the eternal and infinite essence of thought.

It has now been shown, I trust, to the satisfaction of every mind, accustomed to think with clearness and candor, that the denial of absolute Intelligence, to the Infinite Cause of the universe, forms no part of the system of Spinoza.

I perceive nothing in the passages quoted on pp. 16. 17. that calls for any remark, after what has been already said, except the explanatory words, which you have introduced into this sentence.

"It appears that our mind, considered as intelligent, is an eternal mode of thought, which is limited by another eternal mode of thought, and that again by another, and thus to infinity, so that altogether, they [that is, human minds, or minds like the human] constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God."* (p. 17.)

* "Apparit, quod mens nostra, quatenus intelligit, æternus cogitandi modus sit, qui alio æterno cogitandi modo determinatur et hic iterum ab alio et sic in infinitum; ita ut omnes simul Dei æter-

It seems hardly possible that any one should so misapprehend Spinoza, as to suppose he maintained that "human minds, or minds like the human" constitute the infinite intelligence of God. After the instances already considered, however, no misapprehension is very surprising. The doctrine of Spinoza is, that the human mind, in its essence and its existence, is one of the eternal modes, in which the absolute thought of God manifests itself. But these modes exist in an infinite variety. The infinite and eternal intelligence of God is manifested in infinite modes of thought, of which our minds and minds like them are but one ; which modes taken together constitute the infinite and eternal intelligence of God.

The idea of Spinoza may be illustrated by referring to certain conceptions of modern philosophy. Metaphysicians represent the human mind, as consisting of a variety of powers, will, understanding, feeling, and so forth, all of which taken together, constitute the human mind. Still they suppose something back of these powers, without which they could not exist, or be conceived of, that is, the human mind itself.

So too, theologians represent the divine mind as

num et infinitum intellectum constituent." *Ethica*, pars. v. prop. xl. schol.

consisting of a variety of attributes, love, wisdom, justice, and so forth, all of which taken together constitute the divine mind. Still, they suppose something back of these attributes, without which they could not exist or be conceived of, that is, the divine mind itself.

Now Spinoza, in his conceptions of God, rejected the use of the term "power," in the sense of our metaphysicians, and of the term "attribute," in the sense of our theologians. He opposed the common distinctions which are made in the divine nature, as implying somewhat of human limitation and imperfection. Power, will, and intelligence were regarded by him as combined in one absolute principle of the divine nature. Hence, he could not speak of the infinite intelligence of God, as being constituted of several subordinate and limited powers of intelligence. But the modes of the divine essence correspond, in his phraseology, to the different powers which are usually ascribed to God. He, therefore, speaks in the passage quoted, of the infinite intelligence of God, as constituted by the infinite modes, in which it is manifested, of which "the human mind and minds like the human" form but one; just as theologians describe the nature of God, as constituted by the various divine attributes; but, at the same time, he supposes something back of these modes, without which they could not exist

or be conceived of, that is, the divine intelligence itself.*

I have now noticed every thing in your account which I conceive to have a bearing on the main question at issue, namely, whether the attribute of

* The conception of the human mind as a mode of the infinite intelligence may suggest to the admirers of Wordsworth, these profoundly significant lines from the "Excursion."

———"Immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms
Which an abstract Intelligence supplies ;
Whose kingdom is, where Time and Space are not ;

——Thou, dread Source,
Prime, self-existing Cause and End of all,
That in the scale of Being, fill their place,
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained ;——

——Thou, thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
Which thou includest, as the Sea her waves ;
For adoration thou endurest ; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will ;
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure Intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty !
This universe shall pass away—a frame
Glorious ! because the shadow of thy might,
A step, or link, for intercourse with Thee."

WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*, book iv. p. 132. (Boston Ed.)

intelligence is ascribed to God, in the system of Spinoza.

I pass to a consideration of your remarks on the following quotation, which I brought forward as a proof that, according to Spinoza, the Deity is not to be confounded with the material universe.

“The intelligence and will which we should regard as constituting the essence of God, must differ entirely from human intelligence and will. The intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is indeed the cause both of the essence and of the existence of the universe. The intelligence of God, then, is the cause both of the essence and the existence of our intelligence; and must therefore differ from it, as that which is caused differs from its cause, namely, in that which it receives from its cause.”

This passage, you speak of, (pp. 23—26.) as being “composed of sentences altered from the original,” and “making Spinoza express the direct opposite of that for which he is contending.” These are grave charges, and shall be gravely met.

1. With regard to the accuracy of the quotation. The clause in the passage on which I relied to prove that Spinoza made a distinction between the Deity and the material universe was the following. “The intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is indeed the cause

both of the essence and of the existence of the universe." This sentence alone was amply sufficient for my purpose ; it expresses, in a few words, what I believe to be an essential principle in Spinoza's system ; it is to be construed not hypothetically, but positively, as a declaration of his own views ; it is referred to, for this purpose, by some of the most judicious expounders of his philosophy ;* and, had I advanced it, without any addition, it would have conveyed a correct idea of his doctrine on the question at issue. But I perceived, that if I quoted it, without any qualification, an erroneous impression might possibly be produced, in another point of view. For although Spinoza asserts that "the intelligence of God is indeed the cause of the universe," he also declares that the divine intelligence "must differ entirely from human intelligence." It was not consistent with my conceptions of literary fidelity, to pass by this fact without notice. Al-

* Rixner and Herder, for instance,—writers, whom I have usually found safe and agreeable guides in the study of Spinoza. The assertion that they are no authorities on a subject like this can excite only a smile. Rixner quotes the sentence, with the succeeding clause, to show, what we have before seen, that Spinoza integrates will, intelligence, and power in the essence of God. (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. iii. p. 64.) Herder brings it forward with many other passages, in proof of the point I was maintaining, namely, that "intelligence is an attribute of the divine nature." (*Gespräche über Spinoza's System*, p. 170.)

though the additional passages might seem to weaken my case, I felt bound to produce them. I was unwilling to give the impression, by any thing which I said, or omitted to say, that when Spinoza declared "that the intelligence of God is the cause of the universe," he meant to be understood as regarding the intelligence which constitutes the essence of God, as similar to human intelligence. I therefore quoted in addition the two sentences from the same paragraph, in which he asserts the essential distinction between the divine and the human intelligence, with the connecting words,—or "interpolation" as you mildly term it,—"which we should regard;" those words, or others equivalent, being essential in my view, to the correct understanding of the passage.

So much for "interpolation" and "altering from the original." You fail to observe, that the supposed "alteration" was not to strengthen my own view of the case, but to guard against giving a stronger impression in its favor, than I believed to be just.

2. With regard to the meaning of the passage. In the account which you have given, you have been betrayed into errors, no less formidable, than those we have already considered; but I do not deem it necessary to ascribe them to any other cause, than the misapprehension of an obscure

writer, whose mode of thought is so different from popular conceptions.

You say, that the purpose of the passage, from which my quotation is taken, is to show "that neither intellect nor will belong to the nature of God;" "that we cannot ascribe them to the Deity, in any intelligible sense of the words; that is, that we cannot reasonably ascribe them to the Deity at all." (pp. 24, 25.)

The purpose of the passage is not correctly stated in this extract. On the contrary, the design of Spinoza, as he expressly declares, is to show that intelligence and will, so far as they are conceived as constituting the essence of God, must be incomparably superior to those attributes, as they are exhibited in man. The correctness of this statement will appear from the following explanation.

In the sixteenth Proposition, (the Proposition immediately preceding that under consideration,) Spinoza maintains that "from the necessity of the divine nature, infinite effects in infinite modes (that is, every thing which can fall under the infinite intelligence) must proceed." Having proved this proposition, he states the following corollaries, which I have already quoted in another connexion.

"Hence it follows, that God is the efficient cause of all things which can fall under the infinite intelligence.

“That God is a cause by himself, but not by contingency.

“God is the absolutely first cause.”

We come then to the seventeenth Proposition, to which the passage in question is a scholium. It is as follows.

“God acts from the laws of his own nature alone, and compelled by no one.”

“DEMONSTR. From the necessity of the divine nature alone, or (what is the same thing) from the laws of that nature alone, we have just shown that infinite effects must absolutely proceed; we have also shown that nothing can exist, or can be conceived of without God; but all things are in God; therefore, there can be nothing external to him, by which he can be determined or compelled to action; and hence, God acts from the laws of his own nature alone, and compelled by no one.

“Coroll. I. Hence it follows, that there is no cause, from without or from within, except the perfection of his own nature, which can incite God to action.

“Coroll. II. Hence it follows that God is the sole free cause. For God alone exists by the sole necessity of his nature, and acts from the sole necessity of his nature. Therefore, God alone is a free cause.”

Then follows the scholium, from which the pas-

sage is taken. The principles, already laid down being clearly understood, there will be little difficulty in comprehending the argument of Spinoza which I am about to present, in a concise form. I will afterwards give it at length in Spinoza's own words.

Having shown, as I understand him, that creation follows from the necessity of the divine nature (*infinita sequi debent*;) he proceeds to consider those views which represent the freedom of God, as consisting in the power of choice between creating and not creating. The power of choice implies an act of deliberation, consequently of doubt, consequently of imperfection. Intelligence and will in this sense cannot be ascribed to the Infinite and Perfect Being. This idea is repeated in many forms in the writings of Spinoza. "I will show," says he, "that neither intelligence nor will belong to the nature of God." The meaning which he attaches to these terms is evident from the remarks which immediately follow. By intelligence and will, as here used, he understands the human intelligence and will, which are commonly ascribed to God. "I know," says he, "that there are many persons, who think they can demonstrate that the highest intelligence and free will belong to the nature of God; for, say they, they know nothing more perfect which they can attribute to God, than that which is the highest perfection *IN US*." He then

proceeds to assign his objections to their view, that God cannot create all things which fall under his infinite intelligence ; but is determined to the act of creation by some absolute, arbitrary volition. This, he maintains is inconsistent with the divine omnipotence. He then goes on to show that intelligence and will, as those qualities exist in man, cannot be predicated of God ; but that, so far as they are conceived as constituting the divine essence, must be as superior to our intelligence and will, as the constellation called the Dog is superior to the dog, a barking animal. He announces his proposition thus. “Moreover, to say something here also of the intelligence and will, WHICH WE COMMONLY ATTRIBUTE TO GOD ; if intelligence and will pertain to the eternal essence of God, something must be understood by each attribute, different from what men usually understand.” This is the point to be proved.

The demonstration is as follows. 1. “If intelligence pertains to the divine nature, it cannot be, as it is regarded by many, LIKE OUR INTELLIGENCE, naturally posterior to, or simultaneous with the objects that fall under it, since God is prior in causality to all things ; but, on the contrary, the truth and formal essence of things is what it is, because it thus objectively exists in the intelligence of God.” 2.

“Hence, the intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is indeed the cause both of the essence and of the existence of the universe.” 3. “Since then the intelligence of God is the sole cause of things, that is, as we have shown, as well of their essence as of their existence, it must necessarily differ from them both in regard to essence and existence. For the thing caused differs from its cause, precisely in that which it receives from its cause.” 4. “But the intelligence of God is the cause both of the essence and existence of our intelligence.” And therefore, 5. “the intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the divine essence, differs from our intelligence, both in regard to essence and existence; nor can correspond with it in any thing but name; which we wished to prove.”

“Here,” as you observe, (p. 26.) “the argument concludes. It was of course the purpose of Spinoza to prove the proposition which he had laid down at its commencement,” and which he repeats at its close; not as you erroneously assert, “that neither intellect nor will belong to the divine nature,” but that “the intelligence of God so far as it is conceived as constituting the divine essence, must differ from our intelligence.”

I will now give a literal translation of the whole

passage, relating to the present question, with the original Latin.*

“Others suppose that God is a free cause, for this reason, as they fancy, that he is able to effect, that those things which, we have said, proceed from his nature, that is, which are in his power, should not be, or that they should not be produced by him. But this is the same thing as saying, that God can effect, that it should not follow from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles ; or that from a given cause the effect should not proceed, which is absurd. I shall presently show, without the aid of this proposition, that neither intelligence nor will pertain to the nature of God. I am aware, indeed, that there are many who suppose, they can demonstrate that the highest intelligence and free will pertain to the nature of God ; for they aver that they know nothing more perfect which they

* “*Alii putant, Deum esse causam liberam, propterea quod potest, ut putant, efficere, ut ea, quæ ex ejus natura sequi diximus, hoc est, quæ in ejus potestate sunt, non fiant, sive ut ab ipso non producantur. Sed hoc idem est, ac si dicerent, quod Deus potest efficere, ut ex natura trianguli non sequatur, ejus tres angulos æquales esse duobus rectis ; sive ut ex data causa non sequatur effectus, quod est absurdum. Porro infra absque ope hujus Propositionis ostendam, ad Dei naturam neque intellectum, neque voluntatem pertinere. Scio equidem plures esse, qui putant, se posse demonstrare, ad Dei naturam summum intellectum et liberam voluntatem pertinere ; nihil enim perfectius cognoscere sese ajunt, quod Deo tribuere*

can attribute to God, than that which is the highest perfection in us. Moreover although they conceive of God as actually knowing in the highest degree, they do not believe that he can cause all things to exist, which he actually knows; for, in this way they think they should destroy the power of God. If, say they, he had created all things which are in his intelligence, he could then have created nothing more, which they deem contrary to the omnipotence of God; and therefore they prefer to represent God as indifferent to all things, and creating nothing except that which he decreed to create by a certain absolute will. But I think I have shown with sufficient clearness, that from the supreme power of God, or his infinite nature, infinite effects in infinite modes,

possunt, quam id, quod in nobis summa est perfectio. Porro, tametsi Deum actu* summe intelligentem concipiant, non tamen credunt, eum posse omnia, quæ actu intelligit, efficere, ut existant; nam se eo modo Dei potentiam destruere putant. Si omnia, inquit, quæ in ejus intellectu sunt, creavisset, nihil tum amplius creare potuisset, quod credunt Dei omnipotentia repugnare; ideoque maluerunt Deum ad omnia indifferentem statuere, nec aliud creantem præter id, quod absoluta quadam voluntate decrevit creare. Verum ego me satis clare ostendisse puto, a summa Dei potentia, sive infinita natura, infinita infinitis modis, hoc est, omnia

* *Actu intelligentem, actu intelligit*, "actually knowing," "he actually knows;" that is "exercising the act of intelligence." This is another instance, which ought not to be overlooked, of the sense in which Spinoza uses the word *actu* to signify not *real existence*, but *actual exercise*.

that is, all things have necessarily flowed forth, or always proceed by the same necessity; in the same way, as it eternally follows from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles. Wherefore the omnipotence of God was in actual exercise from eternity, and to eternity will remain in the same activity, (*in eadem actualitate*, scholastic Latin, ‘the state of being in actual exercise.’) And in this manner the omnipotence of God, in my judgment, is far more perfectly represented. Nay to speak plainly, my adversaries seem to deny the omnipotence of God. For they are compelled to confess that God knows an infinite variety of things that may be created (*infinita creabilia*) which notwithstanding he can never create. For otherwise, if he should create every thing which he knows,

necessario effluxisse, vel semper eadem necessitate sequi; eodem modo, ac ex natura trianguli ab æterno et in æternum sequitur, ejus tres angulos æquari duobus rectis. Quare Dei omnipotentia actu* ab æterno fuit et in æternum in eadem actualitate manebit. Et hoc modo Dei omnipotentia longe, meo quidem judicio, perfectior statuitur. Imo adversarii Dei omnipotentiam (liceat aperte loqui) negare videntur. Coguntur enim fateri, Deum infinita creabilia intelligere, quæ tamen nunquam creare poterit. Nam alias, si scilicet omnia, quæ intelligit, crearet, suam, juxta ipsos, exhaustiret omnipotentiam et se imperfectum redderet. Ut igitur Deum perfectum statuatur, eo rediguntur, ut simul statuere debeant, ipsum

* This example may be added to those already adduced, as showing the meaning of the term *actu*, in Spinoza's writings.

according to them, he would exhaust his omnipotence and make himself imperfect. They are compelled, therefore, in order to represent God as perfect, to represent, at the same time, that he cannot produce all things to which his power extends; than which nothing more absurd, or more contrary to the omnipotence of God, it seems to me, can be imagined. Still further, to say something here also of the intelligence and will, which we commonly attribute to God; if intelligence and will pertain to the eternal essence of God, something different surely must be understood by each attribute from what men usually understand. For the intelligence and will which would constitute the essence of God must differ entirely from our intelligence and will, nor in any thing, except in name, can they agree; no otherwise, indeed, than as agree the constellation

non posse omnia efficere, ad quæ ejus potentia se extendit; quo absurdius, aut Dei omnipotentia magis repugnans, non video, quid fingi possit. Porro, ut de intellectu et voluntate, quos Deo communiter tribuimus, hic etiam aliquid dicam; si ad æternam Dei essentiam, intellectus scilicet et voluntas pertinent, aliud sane per utrumque hoc attributum intelligendum est, quam quod vulgo solent homines. Nam intellectus et voluntas, qui Dei essentiam constituerent, a nostro intellectu et voluntate, toto coelo differre deberent, nec in ulla re, præterquam in nomine, convenire possent; non aliter scilicet, quam inter se conveniunt canis, signum cœleste, et canis, animal latrans. Quod sic demonstrabo. Si intellectus ad divinam naturam pertinet, non poterit, uti noster intellectus, posterior, (ut plerisque placet), vel simul natura esse cum rebus intellectis, quandoquidem Deus omnibus rebus prior est causalitate;

called the Dog and the dog a barking animal.* Which I will demonstrate thus. If intelligence pertains to the divine nature, it cannot, like our intelligence, be naturally posterior to, as many suppose, or simultaneous with the objects of intelligence, since God is prior in causality to all things; but, on the contrary, the truth and formal essence of things is what it is, because it thus objectively exists [*not existed*†] in the intelligence of God. Therefore, the intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is, indeed, the cause both of the essence and of the existence of the universe; which seems even to have been observed by those who have asserted that the intelligence, will, and power of God are one and the same. Since, therefore, the intelligence of God is the sole cause

sed contra veritas et formalis rerum essentia ideo talis est, quia talis in Dei intellectu existit objective. Quare Dei intellectus, quatenus Dei essentiam constituere concipitur, est revera causa rerum, tam earum essentiae, quam earum existentiae; quod ab iis videtur etiam fuisse animadversum, qui Dei intellectum, voluntatem et potentiam unum et idem esse asseruerunt. Cum itaque Dei intellectus sit unica rerum causa, videlicet (ut ostendimus) tam earum essentiae, quam earum existentiae, debet ipse necessario ab iisdem

* The mind of Spinoza was imbued with the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures. Was not this expression suggested by the sublime words of the prophet, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah lv. 8, 9.

† As translated in *Remarks*, p. 25.

of things, that is, as we have shown, both of their essence, and of their existence, it must necessarily differ from them, both in regard to essence and existence. For that which is caused differs from its cause, precisely in that which it receives from its cause." [Then follows the proof of this proposition, which, as stated in the "Remarks," is "foreign to the purpose," and is therefore omitted.] "But the intelligence of God is the cause both of the essence and the existence of our intelligence; therefore the intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the divine essence, differs from our intelligence, both in regard to essence and existence, nor can agree with it in any thing but name. Which we wished to prove."

It may not be improper to give some explanation of the doctrine of Spinoza, "that the divine intelligence differs entirely from human intelligence;" especially as it is stated in the "Remarks" (p. 25.) that "Spinoza labors to prove that we cannot ascribe intellect and will to the Deity in any intelligible sense of the words; that is, that we cannot reasonably ascribe them to the Deity at all." A

differre, tam ratione essentiae, quam ratione existentiae. Nam causatum differt a sua causa praecise in eo, quod a causa habet. * * * Atqui Dei intellectus est et essentiae et existentiae nostri intellectus causa: ergo Dei intellectus, quatenus divinam essentiam constituere concipitur, a nostro intellectu, tam ratione essentiae, quam ratione existentiae differt, nec in ulla re, praeterquam in nomine, cum eo convenire potest, ut volebamus."

thorough discussion of this subject, however, would demand too much space, for my present purpose. I must therefore, content myself here, with referring to one or two sources, in which the essential distinction between the divine and the human intelligence, is insisted on, and to a certain degree, elucidated.

The language of Spinoza himself, in a work already quoted, which is not to be taken as a proof of his final opinions, but which may serve to illustrate their sense, as laid down in his "Ethics," has an immediate bearing on this point.

"Among the attributes of God we have before enumerated omniscience, which it is sufficiently evident belongs to God ; because knowledge (*scientia*) contains perfection in itself, and God, that is, the most perfect Being, can be destitute of no perfection ; wherefore, knowledge is to be attributed to God in the highest degree, that is, such as presupposes or supposes no ignorance, or privation of knowledge ; for, in that case, there would be imperfection in the attribute, or in God. Hence it follows that God has never possessed intelligence as a power, nor draws conclusions by a process of reasoning, (*nunquam habuisse intellectum potentia, neque per ratiocinium aliquid concludere.*)" *

* "Inter attributa Dei numeravimus antea *Omniscentiam*, quam

I may remark, in passing, that this sentence shows the difficulty in always seizing the correct sense of Spinoza's statements. An incurious or preoccupied reader might infer from the last clause, that Spinoza denied intelligence to God, "in any intelligible sense of the words ;" though his whole argument is intended to prove the contrary.

Mr. Coleridge often presents important suggestions, explanatory of the distinction maintained by Spinoza.

"The Supreme Reason," says Coleridge, "whose knowledge is creative, and antecedent to the things known, is distinguished from the understanding, or creaturely mind of the individual, the acts of which are posterior to the things, it records and arranges."*

"It is, however, of immediate importance, to the point in discussion, that the reader should be made to see how altogether incompatible the principle of judging by general consequences is with the Idea

satis constat Deo competere; quia scientia continet in se perfectionem, et Deus, ens nempe perfectissimum, nulla perfectione carere debet; quare scientia summo gradu Deo erit tribuenda, scilicet talis, quæ nullam præsupponat vel supponat ignorantiam, sive scientiæ privationem; nam tum daretur imperfectio in ipso attributo, sive in Deo. Ex his sequitur Deum nunquam habuisse intellectum potentia, neque per ratiocinium aliquid concludere." *Cogitata Metaphysica, Opera*, vol. i. p. 118.

* Coleridge's *Lay-Sermon*, quoted by President MARSH, in the Appendix to *Aids to Reflection*, p. 313.

of an Eternal, Omnipresent, and Omniscient Being! that he should be made aware of the absurdity of attributing *any* form of Generalization to the all-perfect Mind. *To generalize* is a faculty and function of the Human Understanding, and from its imperfection and limitation are the use and the necessity of generalizing derived. Generalization is a substitute for Intuition, for the power of *intuitive*, (that is, immediate) knowledge. As a substitute, it is a gift of inestimable value to a finite Intelligence, such as *Man* in his present state is endowed with and capable of exercising; but yet a *substitute* only, and an imperfect one, to boot. To attribute it to God is the grossest anthropomorphism.”*

Fenelon is perhaps, still more explicit, in regard to this distinction; and often throws light on many of Spinoza's conceptions, though he considered himself as his antagonist.

“Whatever is real in intelligence,” says Fenelon, “God possesses in a sovereign degree; it is his knowledge (*science*,) his word, his light. Nevertheless, to limit this to the idea of spirit, in the degree and in the sense in which that term applies to us, would be a degradation of the attribute. His intelligence is neither successive, nor multiplied; it is not merely spirit, precisely in the kind

* *Aids to Reflection*, Appendix, p. 329.

and degree of being, which he has communicated to us. If we should see his essence unveiled, we should find that it differs infinitely from the idea which we have of a created spirit. This thought, so far from lowering the idea of the incomprehensible being, is an elevation of this idea to the supreme degree of incomprehensibility." *

"I perceive a great difference between conceiving and comprehending. To conceive of an object, is to have such a knowledge of it as suffices to distinguish it from every other object, with which it could be confounded, and still not to know every thing which is in itself, in such a manner, as to be assured that we distinctly know all its perfections, as far as they are intelligible in themselves.

"To comprehend, signifies to know distinctly and clearly all the perfections of the object, so far as they are intelligible. It is only God who knows the Infinite to infinity; we know the Infinite only in a finite manner. He must therefore see in himself an infinity of things, which we cannot see in him; and those, which we do see in him, he sees with a clearness and a precision, to separate and combine them, which infinitely surpasses our own.

"God who knows himself with this perfect knowledge, which I call comprehension, does not

* FENELON, *L'existence de Dieu*, part. ii. chap. v. pp. 222, 223.

contemplate himself successively, and by a series of reflex thoughts. As God is preëminently one, his thought, which is himself, is also preëminently one; as he is infinite, his thought is infinite; a simple, indivisible, and infinite thought, can have no succession; there is, therefore in this thought, none of the properties of time, which is a limited, divisible and changing existence.” *

I will conclude the discussion of this topic, with summing up the points in which I think you have misapprehended the meaning of the passage under consideration.

1. You state that the proposition to be proved is “that neither intellect nor will belong to the nature of God.” Spinoza, on the contrary states that the proposition to be proved is, “that the intelligence of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the divine essence, must differ from our intelligence.”

2. You state, that the proposition, “the intelligence of God is the cause of our intelligence,” is asserted hypothetically; “according to the supposition that intellect belongs to God;” whereas, it is evident from the connexion of the passage, that it is a positive declaration; to say nothing of its agreement with other declarations to the same effect. For in the proposition which immediately precedes,

* *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 267,

Spinoza declares, that "all things must proceed from the divine nature, which can fall under the divine intelligence;" he assumes the connexion of the divine intelligence with the divine causality ; and when on the next page, he says that he shall show that "intelligence does not belong to the nature of God," he saves himself from the most palpable contradiction that a writer could be guilty of, by confining the sense of intelligence, in this expression, to a limited and imperfect intelligence like the human.

3. You omit in your quotation the words *in nobis*, "in us;" "*quos Deo communiter tribuimus*," "which we commonly attribute to God;" "*uti noster intellectus*," "as our intelligence;" which phrases explain the sense in which Spinoza denies intelligence to the Deity.

I have thus gone over all the statements in your "Remarks," which appeared to me to call for attention, in relation to the opinions of Spinoza. The reader is presented with materials, which will enable him to decide, both as to the justice of the charges which you have brought against me, and the literary questions which are at issue between us.

In closing these notices of the system of Spinoza, it may not be superfluous, perhaps, to repeat the declaration which I made in my former letter, that I

do not adopt his views, as a satisfactory theory of the connexion between the universe and God ; I believe that he fell into many important errors, both as regards his mode of inquiry and the conclusions at which he arrived ; his system is liable to the objection common to all mystical systems, that it exalts the Creator at the expense of the creature ; by denying free-will to the human mind, it impairs what I deem the true foundation of morals, though it shares that defect with popular systems, that can never be suspected of an irreligious character ; but I was unwilling to hear him branded as an atheist in unlimited terms, without protesting against the impropriety of the charge. His devout, sweet, unselfish, truth-seeking spirit should, at least, protect him from the accusation, among those who believe that “the pure in heart shall see God.”

I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of introducing here, the words of two of the leading minds of the present age, who, differing no less widely than myself from the speculative views of Spinoza, possessed a just insight into the character of his system, and its coincidence with the purest religious faith.

Speaking of the gratitude which he cherished towards such writers as George Fox, Jacob Behmen, and William Law, Mr. Coleridge observes, “that the system is capable of being converted into

an irreligious Pantheism, I well know. The Ethics of Spinoza may, or may not, be an instance. But at no time could I believe that in itself and essentially it is incompatible with religion, natural or revealed; and now, I am most thoroughly persuaded of the contrary.” *

“The ready belief which has been yielded to the slander of my ‘potential infidelity,’ I attribute in part to the openness with which I have avowed my doubts whether the heavy interdict under which the name of Benedict Spinoza lies is merited on the whole, or to the whole extent. Be this as it may, I wish, however, that I could find in the books of philosophy, theoretical or moral, which are alone recommended to the present students of Theology in our established schools a few passages as thoroughly *Pauline*, as completely accordant with the doctrines of the established Church, as the following sentences in the concluding page of Spinoza’s Ethics.” †

I translate Mr. Coleridge’s quotation of the original. “In proportion as the mind rejoices in divine love or blessedness, its knowledge is increased, it gains greater power over the passions, and suffers less from those passions which are evil; and therefore from the fact that the mind rejoices in the di-

* COLERIDGE’S *Biographia Literaria*, p. 93.

† *Ibid.*, p. 194.

vine love, or blessedness, it has the power of restraining unlawful desires; no man rejoices in blessedness because he has restrained his passions, but on the other hand the power of restraining unlawful desires arises from this blessedness itself."

The other writer I alluded to is Schleiermacher, who, in a passage, a part of which has already been quoted in this discussion, combines a beautiful testimony to the holy and unworldly character of Spinoza with an allusion to the kindred spirit of Novalis. "Join with me here in offering a reverent tribute to the manes of the holy and proscribed Spinoza. The sublime spirit of the universe filled and penetrated his soul; the Infinite with him was the beginning and the end; the universe his only and everlasting love; in holy innocence and profound humility, he saw himself reflected in the eternal world, as his own nature was the most lovely mirror of that; he was pervaded with religion and a holy spirit, and therefore he stands alone and unapproached, a genuine Master in his own Art, but elevated above the profane guild, without disciples and without the freedom of any corporation.

"Wherefore should I first point out to you, how the same holds true with regard to Art? How you have here also a thousand shadows and delusions and errors from the same cause? Only in silence—for

deep and recent grief has no words—will I refer you in place of every thing else to a glorious example, which you all ought to know, to the divine youth, who has too early fallen asleep; to whom, every thing which touched his soul, was Art; whose whole contemplation of the world at once became a great poem; whom, although he has scarcely done more than utter the first tones of his voice, you must number among the richest poets, those rare spirits, who possess no less depth than clearness and life. Let me ask you to behold in him the power of the enthusiasm and the sobriety of a pious mind, and acknowledge that when philosophers shall be religious and seek for God, like Spinoza, and artists shall be pious and love Christ, like Novalis, then will the mighty resurrection be celebrated for both worlds.” *

The words of Spinoza himself on this subject are full of instruction; they illustrate his character and his principles; and with them I will take leave of the present topic.

Alluding, in a letter to a friend, to a harsh attack, which he had received from a critic of one of his works, he remarks, “I will briefly show what a sinister interpretation he has put upon me, whether from malice, or from ignorance, I cannot easily

* SCHLEIERMACHER’S *Reden*, pp. 47, 48.

say. If he had known my manner of life, he would not so readily have persuaded himself that I taught atheism. For, atheists are wont to pursue honors and riches to excess, which I have ever despised, as all know who are acquainted with me.

“But he says, ‘that in avoiding the error of the superstitious I have laid aside all religion.’ What he may understand by religion, and what by superstition, I do not know. But, I would fain ask, has he laid aside all religion, who thinks that God is to be acknowledged as the supreme good, and that, as such, he is to be loved with a free mind? And that this alone makes our most perfect happiness and liberty? That the reward of virtue, moreover, is virtue itself, and that the punishment of folly and weakness is folly itself? And, in fine, that each one should love his neighbor, and obey the commands of the supreme power? But these things I have not only expressly declared, but proved by the strongest reasons.

“You may thus see, my friend, that this person has evidently departed from the truth; and nevertheless I grant that he has done no injury to me, but the greatest to himself, when he did not blush to assert that with covert and disguised arguments I taught atheism.” *

* *Epistola* xlix. vol. i. pp. 628, 629, 633.

I intended to consider your account of Schleiermacher and De Wette in this letter ; but I have already made it too long ; I will, therefore, reserve that subject for another occasion ; and discuss it, in a separate letter, which will soon follow.

Meantime, should you deem it “proper to remark” on what I have now said, notwithstanding the previous “improbability” that you allude to, I shall give your “remarks” an attentive, and I trust, not an uncandid perusal. If I find any thing in them that seems to call for special notice, and the discussion of which may serve the cause of truth and justice, I shall probably continue my examination. I do not feel at liberty to retire from a contest,—if that name is to be applied to what should be a mutual search for truth,—so long as a word spoken may aid a sincere seeker, or increase the light and peace of our religious community.

You once or twice allude to the fact that my letter was published anonymously. What inference you would draw from that circumstance is not apparent. It certainly does not change the force of the arguments, presented in the letter ; but I relied on an appeal to arguments, not to personal considerations ; and as it was of no importance to bring an obscure name before the public, it seemed to me to be more in accordance with good taste, as well

as common usage, not to obtrude myself unnecessarily. I surely had no desire for concealment ; this was impossible, even had I wished it. I would, however, avoid the slightest appearance of shrinking from responsibility ; I would not utter under a veil, what I should not be ready to proclaim from the house-tops ; and therefore I drop the signature of "An Alumnus," and

subscribe myself,

Yours, &c., &c.,

GEORGE RIPLEY.

BOSTON, *December* 23, 1839.

161
185
246

DEFENCE OF "THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY" EXAMINED.

A

THIRD LETTER

TO

MR. ANDREWS NORTON,

OCCASIONED BY HIS DEFENCE OF

A DISCOURSE ON "THE LATEST FORM OF INFIDELITY."

BY GEORGE RIPLEY.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

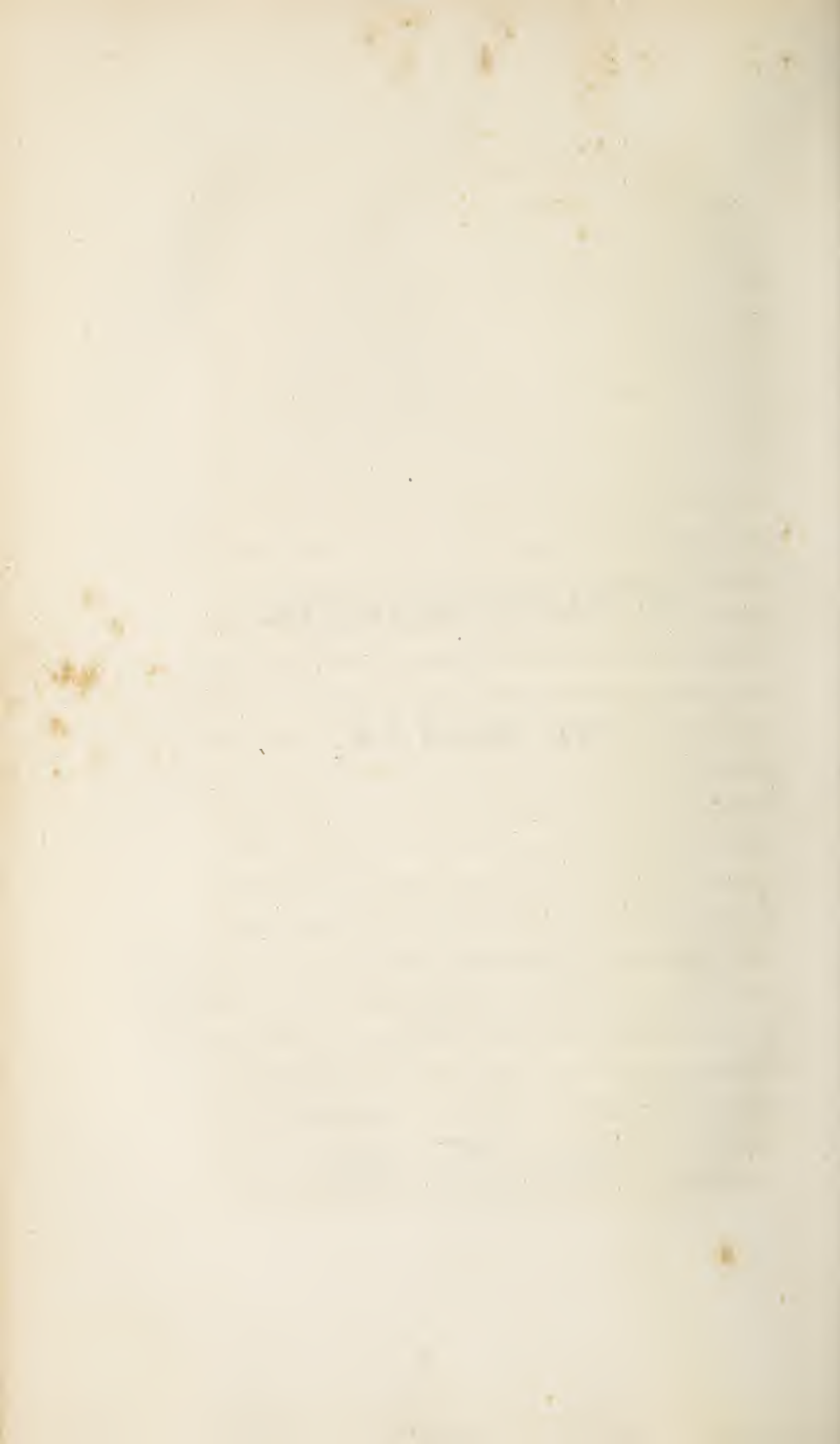
M DCCC XL.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY FREEMAN AND BOLLES,
WASHINGTON STREET

SCHLEIERMACHER

AND

DE WETTE.



LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

I PROPOSE, in this Letter, to consider your account of the religious opinions of Schleiermacher and De Wette. In the "Notes" to your "Discourse," as well as in your "Remarks" on my first Letter, you have presented several statements on this subject, which it is my duty to examine, and which, as I shall endeavor to show, are adapted to produce an erroneous impression concerning the character and position of those eminent theologians.

If it were merely my desire to verify the statement, which I have previously made, in opposition to your own, my task could be despatched in a short compass; but I conceive that it may not be without use to exhibit a more complete view of the theology in question than has yet been attempted; and I must, therefore, solicit the indulgence of our common readers, in the demands that I shall make on their time and attention.

It is seldom, I am aware, that the earnest seeker

of truth will deem it worth while to engage in an elaborate historical discussion of individual opinions ; the question which most interests his mind is not, What has been thought, but, What is ; he prefers to establish his convictions by the comparison of arguments, rather than by an appeal to authority ; and provided he has gained a clear insight for himself, he looks with comparative indifference on the controversies of the past.

There are reasons, however, in the present case, which impart a more than ordinary interest to the question, which has been stated. Among the men of genius, whom the literature of Germany presents to our notice, few have been more distinguished in their respective departments, than Schleiermacher and De Wette. They are both, genuine, original men ; both have exerted a creative influence on the science, to the cultivation of which they have devoted their powerful minds ; theology, in their hands, has been redeemed from scholastic traditions, and inspired with a fresh and vigorous life ; with a manly freedom in all relating to the mere letter, they combine the profoundest reverence for the essential spirit of religion ; and, with a just comprehension of the results of speculation in modern times, they cherish a living and earnest faith in divine revelation, and the mission of Christ for the redemption of the world. Their singular intellect-

ual ability, the wonderful diversity of their gifts, the importance and variety of the subjects, to which they have directed their attention, their calm and balanced appreciation of discordant tendencies, their transparent candor of judgment, and the rare learning which they bring to the support and illustration of their opinions, have given them a conspicuous station in the development of thought, and a wide influence upon the present theology of Europe. They will be certain, accordingly, to become the subjects of a liberal curiosity ; and the recent interest they have awakened among us, I cannot but consider as a happy indication of our times.

It is not as individuals, however, that they chiefly concern us at present. We are to regard them as exponents of the progress of opinion in German theology. They are the two most prominent names in the modern history of that science. They mark the most interesting epoch in its gradual development. They represent the issue of the great struggle which has been carried on, since the middle of the last century. With their labors, commenced the first decided reaction against the Rationalistic tendency, which, from the time of Immanuel Kant, to the period of the establishment of the University at Berlin, may be said to have been predominant in the German Lutheran church.

The character of this movement, it would seem,

has not been very clearly understood ; and, as will appear, in the sequel, had not attracted your attention, before the publication of your "Discourse." If you had known that the scientific endeavors of Schleiermacher and De Wette have had for their principal object, to reconcile the belief of the divine origin of Christianity with the objections of the Rationalists, who denied that doctrine, I presume you could not have spoken of either of them as among "the most noted in the modern school of infidelity." A slight sketch of this movement, therefore, will be necessary as an introduction to the detailed exposition which I am about to present.

The theology of the Lutheran creeds is founded on the principles of a rigid and exclusive Supernaturalism. As carried to the utmost limits, by many of its early expounders, it regarded revelation as an insulated fact in history, confirmed by prophecies and miracles, recorded, in an infallible form, in the Holy Scriptures, from which its import was to be derived merely by the aids of grammatical and historical criticism and the rules of logic. It labored under the defect of removing revelation from its connexion with nature and history ; it thus deprived it of its vitality, reduced it to an inexplicable and mechanical system ; and disclaimed the attempt to establish its inward reasonableness and truth. The supernatural element was made prominent and ex-

clusive; the rational element was undervalued and neglected.

It was unavoidable, in an inquiring and critical age, that the system should have been submitted to a bold and unsparing examination. The whole theory of revelation was discussed; the narratives of the Gospels made the subject of a fearless scrutiny; every tradition looked in the face; every doctrine tried for its life; a general fermentation ensued; the Church rocked, as with the explosions of an earthquake; Rationalism began to prevail, and religion to go down.

This system, which resulted from the general conflict of thought, in its exclusive character, discards the idea of an immediate divine revelation, and substitutes reason in its place, as the only legitimate source of religious truth. It considers Jesus Christ as a wise and good man, the defender of many valuable ideas, and the sincere friend of the human race; but denies his claims to Divinity, either for his mission, his doctrine, or his person. It regards Christianity as an important historical phenomenon, but arising in the ordinary course of nature; with no valid pretensions to a peculiar divine origin; and no right to authority over the reason of man. In short, it makes the rational element in religion prominent and exclusive; while it undervalues and neglects the supernatural element.

These systems, accordingly, were in direct antagonism with each other. Each perceived an important element of truth ; but, by each also, an important element was overlooked. Neither did complete justice to the subject ; neither could satisfy the rational, religious mind ; the one was defective, by its neglect of the reason ; the other, by its neglect of revelation.

A system was necessary, which should combine what was true, and reject what was false in both ; which should take its stand on a higher ground ; which should do equal justice to the supernatural element and the rational element in the Christian revelation. The problem was to defend the divine origin of Christianity, after the attacks it had received from the advocates of Rationalism ; to reconcile the universal faith of the Church with the conclusions of scientific investigation ; and, in the solution of this problem, the spirit of Christ was made the principal element. It was admitted that many objects of reverence had been deprived of their sacred character, by the efforts of the Rationalists ; divinity could no longer be seen in the external letter ; it escaped the researches of the critic and the skill of the logician ; but it could not be banished from the person of Christ ; the presence of God was displayed in the manifestation of his Son.

This system, which attempts to restore the original unity between reason and revelation, faith and knowledge, to combine all the elements which are contained in the history of Christ, with the purest light of modern science, and to establish a living belief in Christianity on a foundation inaccessible to the assaults of the skeptic, has received its most efficient support from Schleiermacher and De Wette. It is no less erroneous to class these theologians with the Rationalists, who are distinguished by their denial of the divine origin of Christianity, than it would be to arrange them with the early Lutheran dogmatists, who called in question the claims of the human reason.*

I now proceed to an examination of your account of Schleiermacher, reserving what I may have to say of De Wette, to the close of my Letter.

* See a complete and interesting account of the principles of this movement, by ULLMANN, in *Studien and Kritiken*, for 1836, vol. i. pp. 5—61. A portion of the article referred to may be found translated in my first Letter, pp. 144—148. It is intimated in the "Remarks" (p. 52.) that "the religious character of Ullmann is different from that of Schleiermacher." If it is meant by this, that the theological opinions of Ullmann are different from those of Schleiermacher, on the point concerning which I referred to them, the supposition is incorrect. It may easily be set right by the article quoted.

You asserted in one of the "Notes" to your "Discourse," that Schleiermacher published a work on religion, which contains "a system of pantheism;" which declares that "religion has nothing to do with belief or action;" that "it is unconnected with morality;" that "the idea of a personal God is pure mythology;" and that "the belief and desire of personal immortality are wholly irreligious." (p. 44.) You also asserted that "the disciples of the new school," of which you had just before represented Schleiermacher as "one of the most noted," "are in Germany called Rationalists or Naturalists." (pp. 43, 45.) You stated, moreover,—though with what intention, it is not perfectly clear,—that Schleiermacher "partook of the sacrament on his death-bed, as a Christian." (p. 44.)

In my first Letter, I endeavored to show very briefly that this representation of the religious opinions of Schleiermacher was erroneous. I remarked, that "you attempt to support your allegations by the citation of detached passages from one of his earliest writings, without the qualifications which guard them where they stand, and without any reference to his subsequent productions, in which his theological views are more fully and distinctly expressed. In this way, you have presented an erroneous idea of his position as a theolo-

gian, and treated with injustice the character of one of the most sincere and exemplary men, who have ever devoted their lives to the service of truth." (pp. 131, 132.)

In proof of this, I referred to the purpose of the "Discourses on Religion," which was not to present "an elaborate or complete system of speculative doctrine," not to discuss the truth or falsehood of abstract religious conceptions, but to awaken the educated men of Germany to a reverence for religion, by showing that it is independent of the technical creeds of theology ; that it addresses the devout affections, rather than the reflective understanding ; that the heart is its seat, not the head ; and that "the conceptions which he renounces as essential to religion, are only those which are taken from human and earthly relations, and which consequently pervert every spiritual idea of God and immortality." (p. 137.) As an illustration of his general views on these topics, I produced a quotation from one of his notes, in which he says, "We must admit an essential difference between the inability to form such a human and personal conception of God, and the denial of the existence of the Living God,—which last alone can be designated as atheism ; in like manner, he who does not incline to such a material conception of immortality, is very far from discarding the genuine hope of

immortality. And as we may call every man religious, who believes in a Living God, we may also call every one religious who believes in the Everlasting Life of the Soul, without wishing to define the way or the manner in which it must be conceived." (p. 138.) I then gave a short sketch of the opinions held by Schleiermacher, and the school which he founded, in regard to the Christian revelation.

In your "Remarks," you contend that your account of Schleiermacher is essentially correct ; that "language cannot be used more deceptively than it is in the passage quoted," which represents him as a believer in the Living God, and in Everlasting Life ; and that "the general account of his opinions respecting Christianity is equally deceptive ;" and you persist in the assertion that "using the word Rationalist in its widest acceptation as equivalent to Naturalist ; that is, as denoting one who, rejecting revelation, founds his faith on natural religion," (p. 49.) the term is applicable to Schleiermacher, as having "as little belief in the divine authority of our religion," "as the earlier German Rationalists." (Ib.)

I now repeat, that your statements on this subject are radically defective and erroneous ; that the views presented in my first Letter are confirmed by the whole character of Schleiermacher's writings ; on this issue, the question is now to be discussed ;

and I shall bring forward the evidence, with but few comments of my own.

The detached expressions of Schleiermacher, which you quote from his "Discourses on Religion," are explained from the design and character of the work in which they appear. Taken in connection with the specific purpose, which he had in view, they will be found not to justify the inferences which you draw from them, and to involve no real inconsistency with the pure and elevated religious doctrines which he sets forth in his subsequent writings.

It will be necessary, therefore, to give a more minute account of the point of view, from which the subject is regarded in that celebrated work, than was consistent with the plan of my former Letter.

The "Discourses on Religion" are addressed to "the educated among its despisers,"—a designation which, in some degree, indicates their character. They were composed at a period when the power of Christianity had yielded to the boasted illumination of the age; the culture of the intellect was deemed the noblest object of endeavor; the exercise of the reflective and critical understanding usurped the place of the higher instincts of the soul; logical analysis was regarded as the surest

and most comprehensive organ of truth ; and religion, deprived of its vitality, as an original and independent principle of human nature, was resolved into a belief of speculative doctrines, or the practice of an artificial and heartless morality.

The work of Schleiermacher is a bold and impassioned attack on the religious degradation of the age. He meets the despisers, whom he addresses, on their own ground, carries the war into the province where they felt themselves safe from assault, and triumphantly shows that their contempt for religion proceeds from ignorance of man ; that there is a foundation for piety in every human soul, which cannot be touched by their objections, and which should command their deepest veneration.

“As a man,” says he, “I would speak to you, according to my own convictions, of the holy mysteries of humanity ; of the feelings of my soul, when in the gush of youthful enthusiasm, I sought after the unknown ; of that sentiment, which, since my first consciousness of thought and life, has been the most inward and powerful spring of my whole being ; and which will never lose its supremacy, whatever shocks I may receive from the fluctuations of time, and the course of human affairs.” *

In order to accomplish his purpose, Schleierma-

* *Reden über die Religion*, (Berlin, 1831,) p. 3.

cher declares that it is not his intention to discuss the truth or falsehood of any abstract conceptions concerning religion, but to point out the essential element in human nature, on which all religion depends. He thus disclaims the attempt of presenting a system of speculative dogmas; his object is of a totally different character; that is, to exhibit the general principle which is prior to all systematic conceptions, which is common to all religions in every age, which constitutes man a being capable of religion, and which, existing as a primitive germ in the human soul, is manifested in the various religious forms that have prevailed in the world. He addresses himself, accordingly, to the educated men of Germany, who, though cherishing strong prejudices against religion, might be presumed competent to understand the subtile and profound distinctions, which he was about to propose.

“I do not seek,” says he, “to awaken individual emotions which may perhaps belong within the sphere of religion; nor to maintain or controvert individual conceptions. It is my purpose rather to conduct you into its most secret depths, from which all its various manifestations proceed. I would point out to you the original elements of Humanity on which it depends, and its connexion with that which you regard as the highest and most precious. I would place you upon the pinnacles of the temple,

that you may survey the whole extent of the holy ground, and unveil its most sacred and hidden mysteries.” *

In pursuing this object, Schleiermacher attempts to show that the essential spirit of religion is not identical with the artificial and elaborate systems which human ingenuity has framed for the explanation of its character. The speculative doctrines of theology presuppose an original element in the nature of man, from which they proceed ; they do not constitute the essence of religion ; but their value and importance depend on the fidelity with which they represent this essence. “You are undoubtedly well versed in the history of human follies, and of course, have run through the various systems of religion, from the absurd fables of voluptuous nations to the most refined Deism ; from the gross superstition of human sacrifices to that incoherent medley of moral philosophy and metaphysics, which is known at present by the name of purified Christianity ; and you have found them all untenable and contrary to reason. I am by no means disposed to call in question your conclusion.—

“For what after all, are those artificial theories, in themselves considered, but productions of the calculating, mechanical understanding, in which every

* *Reden*, p. 13.

separate portion has its place only as it is confined and limited by the others? Do they not appear to you in this light,—these systems of theology, these hypotheses of the origin and the end of the world, these analytical representations of the nature of an Incomprehensible Being,—in which every thing falls into the tone of frigid argumentation, and even what is highest can be treated only in the manner of one of the vulgar controversies of the schools. But this certainly,—I appeal to your own feelings,—is not religion. If then you have only taken religious theories and opinions into view, you do not yet understand religion, and what you despise is not religion.” *

“Religion, by its very nature, is as foreign to the precision of systems, as philosophy, on the other hand, is inclined to it. Consider only upon whom those artificial fabrics rest, whose fragility you ridicule, whose false proportions offend your taste, and the incongruity of whose pretension with their powers awakens your sport. Are they the heroic names in religion? Name to me, among all those who have ever introduced a new revelation into the world, or have pretended to one,—a single individual who has thought it worth the pains to engage in such a Sysyphus-like labor. No. It is only in

* *Reden*, pp. 16—18.

those personal manifestations of heavenly emotions, when the holy fire must stream forth from enkindled and bursting hearts, that the mighty thunder of their word announces that the Godhead reveals himself through them. In like manner, verbal conceptions and formulas are merely outward exhibitions, necessary indeed, and inseparable from the inward emotion ; and as such, intelligible only by means of the inward emotion of which they are the symbol. But the formal connexion of doctrine with doctrine is rarely attempted by them ; and then only, when it is required to obviate misunderstanding, or to detect pretence. It is from different attempts of this kind, that the prevailing systems of theology have gradually been composed. You must not then give your principal attention to that which is only the repeated and broken echo of the original voice ; you must place yourself within the hidden sphere of a religious mind, and endeavor to comprehend the enthusiasm with which it is inspired ; you must seize the production of light and warmth, at the moment of their birth, in a soul prostrate before the Universe.* If you neglect to do this, you

* This is one of the expressions, from which the Pantheism of Schleiermacher has been inferred. Although not directly connected with the present topic, as it throws some light on the general question concerning his opinions, I may as well quote here the explanation which he gives in a Note to the Discourse.

will know nothing of religion. You will be in the same condition with him, who, with combustible materials, seeks too late the fire which the flint has struck out of the steel, and finds only a cold and insignificant atom of rough metal from which a flame can no more be enkindled." *

Religion, then, according to Schleiermacher, is independent of speculative theories; its essence does not consist in any abstract conceptions whatever; and although he does not maintain, as you

"If a religious soul, which is unquestionably the object of this description, is usually called a soul prostrate before God, but instead of 'God' the word 'Universe' is here employed, then the Pantheism of the author in this passage cannot be denied. Such is the construction, I will not say the interpretation, which these words have not seldom received from superficial and, at the same time, suspicious readers, who did not consider that I was here speaking of the production of light and warmth in such a soul; that is to say, of the origin of those religious emotions which are immediately transformed into religious conceptions and views (light), and into a state of mind prostrate before God (warmth), and that it was, therefore, appropriate to my design to direct the attention to the mode in which such emotions commence. But they arise precisely at the moment when man bows in reverence before the universe, and hence they exist habitually in those minds in which such reverence is habitual. For not only generally, but constantly, do we perceive God and his Eternal Power and Godhead in the works of creation; and this not merely in individual objects considered in and for themselves, but only in so far as they are embraced in the Unity and Universality in which alone God is immediately manifested." (pp. 27, 28.)

* *Reden*, pp. 19, 20.

very incautiously assert, that, "it is unconnected with morality," (p. 44.) he insists that religion and morality are two separate elements in human nature ; he would not, with the prevailing philosophy of his day, make religion a subordinate appendage to morality, or confound the one with the other, but, on the contrary, while he defends the reality of the moral element as an essential principle of the soul, he defends the reality of the religious element as an equally essential, distinct, and independent principle of the soul.

"It is contended that religion should be merely subservient to morality ; that it should have a purpose beyond itself ; and that it should demonstrate its profit and uses. What a miserable degradation ! And its defenders should make it their aim to secure to it this degradation ! Rather let them, who make such a constant reference to utility, and who in the end value morality and right for some extrinsic advantage,—rather let them be lost sight of themselves, in this eternal circle of a general utility,—in which they permit every thing good to disappear, and of which no man who desires to have any merits of his own can understand a single word of sound import,—than that they should venture to set themselves up for defenders of religion, whose interests they are wholly incompetent to manage. A glorious renown, indeed, for this heavenly visitant,—

that it can minister such tolerable aid to the earthly occasions of man! Peculiar honor for its spirit of freedom and self-repose, that it gives such vigilance and acuteness to his conscience! But for such purposes, it does not descend on you from Heaven. An object, which is loved and valued, on account of some advantage that is not essential to its nature, may indeed be of service, but it cannot possess an independent necessity. A reasonable man will measure its worth merely according to that of the ultimate end, on account of which it is desired. In this way, the claims of religion would be estimated at a low rate." *

We thus see, that in the opinion of Schleiermacher, the essence of religion does not consist in speculative theories or in outward morality. It claims a peculiar province in human nature; it is to be loved and honored for its own exceeding and unalterable worth; it stands far above every thing which is usually counted most valuable among men. He then proceeds to show its positive character, to unfold his views of its peculiar essence, and to designate the characteristic distinction, which separates it from all other objects of human interest. This is the sense of the dependence of all created things on God.

* *Reden*, p. 24.

“The measure of knowledge is not the measure of piety; since piety is often manifested in its most beautiful, original, and peculiar forms, in him who can make no pretensions to an independent knowledge of nature, but who has gathered only individual portions through his connexion with scientific men. Nay, the religious man will cheerfully acknowledge, even when you look down upon him in scorn, that as a religious man he does not possess this knowledge of which you boast; for in that case, he also must be a philosopher. And I will here interpret for you in distinct words, that which the most of them only obscurely divine, but are unable to indicate, namely, that when you place the Deity at the summit of your science, as the ultimate ground of all that is or can be known, they indeed honor and commend the procedure, but it is not the same with their way of knowing and possessing God; from which, as they freely admit, and as is evident from their example, scientific knowledge cannot be derived. It is true, indeed, that contemplation is essential to religion, and that you can never call him a pious man, whose mind is locked up in dull stupidity, with no perception of the life of the Universe; but this contemplation, like your knowledge of nature, is not directed to the essence of one finite object in its connexion and its contrast with others, nor like your knowledge of God,—if I may use here for

a moment the old expressions,—to the essence of the Supreme, Original Cause in itself, and in its relation to all that which at the same time is both cause and effect.

“ The contemplation of the pious man, on the contrary, is only the immediate consciousness of the universal being of every thing finite in the Infinite, and through the Infinite, of every thing temporal in the Eternal, and through the Eternal. To seek this [mode of being] and to find it in all that lives and moves, in all production and change, in all action and suffering ; to possess and to acknowledge life itself in immediate feeling only as this mode of existence,—this is religion. When this is found, religion is satisfied. When this is concealed, religion perceives only limitation and agony, wretchedness and death. Religion is, accordingly, a life in the infinite nature of the Universe, in one and all, in God, possessing and enjoying all in God and God in all. But science and knowledge is it not, neither of the world, nor of God. It only recognises these, without being identical with them. They are a revelation to it of the Infinite in the finite, which [revelation] it also sees in God, and God in it.” *

Religion, thus explained, in its primitive character, as a sense of God on the soul, has its seat,

Reden, pp. 42, 43.

neither in knowledge, nor in action, but in feeling. "This is the peculiar sphere which I would claim for religion, and that, without reserve or limitation. Your feeling, so far as it expresses your being and life, in common with that of the Universe, in the manner which has been described, so far as you regard the individual elements of which it is composed as an agency of God upon you, imparted through the agency of the creation,—this is your piety." *

The general views of Schleiermacher, in regard to the distinction between religion, and speculative belief and morality may be understood from the passages now adduced; but it may be useful to present here the succinct statement of the whole subject, which is contained in his great work on the "Christian Faith."

"The piety which constitutes the basis of all church fellowship, considered in itself alone, is neither knowledge, nor action, but a determinate mode of feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness.—

"If then, these three elements being supposed, namely, feeling, knowledge, and action, it be declared, that of the three, piety belongs to feeling, it is not to be understood by this, that it is excluded from all connexion with knowledge and action. On the contrary, if immediate self-consciousness always forms the medium of transition between the elements

* *Reden*, pp. 53, 54.

in which knowledge, and those in which action predominates, so will it also pertain to piety to rouse up knowledge and action, and every moment, in which piety exerts a prevailing influence, it will include one or both as a germ within itself. But this is the very truth asserted in the proposition, not an objection to it; for if it were otherwise, the pious movements could not be combined with the others in one life, but piety would be something by itself, without any influence on the other modes of spiritual life. But our proposition maintains that a peculiar province should be secured to piety, in connexion with every thing else, in opposition to the contrary assertions, that piety is either knowledge, or action, or both, or a state compounded of feeling, knowledge, and action, and in this polemic relation, our proposition is to be still further considered.

“If then we must make piety consist in knowledge, it would be preëminently either that knowledge altogether, or the essential portion of it, which is set forth as the substance of religious doctrine, (*Inhalt der Gläubenstehre*,) or it must be absolutely false, that we here investigate the essence of piety, for the sake of the religious doctrine. If, therefore, piety be this knowledge, then must the measure of this knowledge in an individual be the measure of his piety. For, whatever in its increase or diminution is not the measure of the perfection of an object, cannot constitute the perfection of that object. Consequently, upon the above supposition, he who best understood the Christian doctrine, would be the best Christian. And this would no man admit, even if we premised, that he only is the best Christian, who holds the most strongly to what is essential, and does not lose sight of this in what is merely adventitious and external; but, on the contrary, it would be maintained, that very different degrees of piety may be found with equal perfection of this knowledge, and also, very

different degrees of this knowledge, with equal perfection of piety.

“But the statement that piety is knowledge, it may be alleged, does not refer so much to the character of the knowledge, as to the certainty of the conceptions; so that the knowledge of religious doctrines is piety merely on account of the certainty which belongs to them, and, accordingly, on account of the strength of conviction with which they are held, while a reception of this knowledge, without conviction is no piety. In that case, the strength of conviction would be the measure of piety; and this is no doubt the meaning of those who love to define the word “faith,” as the truth of conviction. But in all other more peculiar departments of knowledge, conviction itself has no other measure, than the clearness and intelligibleness of the thought. Now if this be the case with the conviction we are speaking of, we are brought back to our former ground, that he who thinks most clearly and thoroughly on religious propositions, considered separately and in their connexion, must also be the most pious man. If then this explanation be rejected, and the supposition still be preserved, certainty in this case, must be something different, and have a different measure. However closely piety may be connected with this certainty, it is not therefore connected in the same way with the knowledge which we have in view. But if still the knowledge which forms the doctrines of religion be related to piety, it is to be explained in this way, that piety is certainly the object of that knowledge, but that this can be developed only so far as certainty resides in the decisions of self-consciousness.

“But if, on the other hand, piety is to consist in action, it is evident that the kind of action which constitutes it, cannot be determined by its intrinsic character; for we learn from experience, that together with the most excellent conduct, that

which is most odious,—with the most important acts, those which are the most trivial and insignificant,—are performed as pious, and from motives of piety. We are, therefore, only directed to the form and manner, in which the action takes place. But this is to be comprehended only from two opposite points, namely, the motive lying at its ground, as the point of commencement, and the consequence which it had in view, as the point of termination. Now no one will call an action more or less pious, on account of the greater or less degree of perfection, in which the consequence aimed at is attained. But are we referred to the motive ; it is then evident that a determinate state of self-consciousness, whether it be pleasure or the contrary, lies at the ground of every motive ; and that this is the purest distinction of one impulse from another. Hence, an action will be pious, so far as the determination of self-consciousness, the feeling which has become an affection and passed into an impulse, is a pious one. Both suppositions therefore lead to the same point, namely, that there are knowledge and action belonging to piety, but that neither constitutes its essence ; and that they belong to it so far only, as in the one case, the feeling excited comes to repose, as an object of thought, and, in the other, is manifested in an action expressive of its character.

“ Finally, no one will deny, that there are states of feeling, as repentance, contrition, assurance, joy in God, which we call pious in and for themselves, without reference to any knowledge or action proceeding from them ; although we certainly expect, that they will continue themselves in further required actions, as well as be submitted to examination.” *

Your assertion that, according to Schleiermacher, “ religion has nothing to do with action,” is now

* *Der Christliche Glaube*, vol. i. pp. 7—14.

seen to be contradicted by his express declarations. In selecting your quotations, it would seem that you overlooked the following caution, which might have guarded you against the error. "But, I beseech you, do not so egregiously misunderstand me, as if I thought that one of these could exist without the other; that one could possess religion and be pious, and at the same time be immoral. This is indeed impossible." *

We have thus seen that Schleiermacher regarded feeling as the original element of religion, rather than speculative knowledge, or outward morality. This consideration will explain the statements to which you allude in the "Discourses," in regard to the doctrines of a personal God, and personal immortality.

I will commence with an explanation of the views of Schleiermacher upon the connexion between any speculative conceptions of the Deity, and the inward feeling of absolute dependence on his Infinite power and love.

According to your assertion, to represent Schleiermacher as a believer in the Living God, is "the most deceptive use of language of which one is capable." This is the question, which we are now to consider.

* *Reden*, p. 44.

The essence of religion has been shown to consist in a sense of dependence on God ; but, according to the ideas which then prevailed with many in Germany, a definite conception of God, in his personal existence, was essential to piety ; no speculative conceptions, however, in the opinion of Schleiermacher, could do justice to the Infinite Reality, which is the object of religious feeling ; the representation of God, moreover, in a personal form, necessarily involves certain human and finite elements ; to distinguish between what is true and essential, and what is limited and imperfect in our idea of the Deity, is the great problem of religious philosophy ; but, while we feel ourselves dependent on the Infinite and Invisible Power, which sustains both us and the Universe, we have the primitive essence of religion in our hearts, although we may not have solved the problem alluded to, in a manner that satisfies the demands of speculation.

If this view of the connexion between the speculative intellect, and personal religious experience be Pantheism, then was Schleiermacher a Pantheist ; if it be Atheism, then was he an Atheist ; but the accusation can excite little uneasiness ; for, in the first place, he must share it in common with the most eminent fathers of the church, with the soundest thinkers of modern times, and with a multitude, which no man can number, who in every age, have

felt that God was their sun and shield, their light and glory, but when called on to explain their speculative conceptions of his nature, have confessed that "such knowledge is too wonderful for them, that it is high and they could not attain to it;" and, in the second place, if the name of atheism be applicable to such conceptions of God, as were cherished by Schleiermacher, the name loses its usual significance, and expresses a deep and vital piety, the possession of which would make any man the object of veneration and envy.

The earliest reference which Schleiermacher makes to the difficulties in gaining an abstract conception of the Deity, which shall be free from speculative contradictions or errors, is found in the Introduction to the "Discourses on Religion."

"Let be forgiven," says he, "for speaking in this manner of myself. The language of piety, you must be aware can never proceed from pride; for true piety is always filled with humility. Piety was the motherly bosom in whose holy seclusion my youthful life was nourished, and prepared for the world which had not yet opened upon it; my spirit breathed its atmosphere, before it had found its appropriate sphere in science and the experience of life; it aided me when I began to examine the faith which I inherited, and to purify my thoughts and feelings from the ruins of antiquity; it remained

with me when even the God and the immortality of my childish days disappeared before the doubting eye ; it guided me when I was without fixed purposes to active life ; it pointed out to me the manner in which with my advantages and defects, I was to maintain the dominion of holiness in my undivided being ; and through its influence alone have I become acquainted with friendship and love.”*

Now this passage, taken by itself, might seem to prove, that the early faith in God and in immortality, which the writer cherished in childhood, had given place, in maturer years, to the suggestions of absolute skepticism ; that he had renounced entirely the two great doctrines of speculative religion. This, however, would be a very erroneous supposition. It would indeed be difficult to reconcile the supposition with the general spirit and character of the passage ; but it is completely set aside by the explicit declarations of Schleiermacher himself.

“The first apprehension of these two ideas [of God and immortality], which is always of a very material character, at a time when the soul lives only in sensible images, by no means vanishes from every mind ; but rather, in a majority of cases, is gradually elevated and purified ; in such a manner, however, that the analogy of the human remains in the conception of the Supreme Being, and the analogy

* *Reden*, p. 10.

of the earthly [in the conception of immortality] as the means of holding the more profound and less obvious reality. But the case is different with them who early plunge into the depths of pure contemplation. For as soon as they perceive, by a comparison of their own ideas, (*sie sich selbst sagen*, literally, 'say to themselves,') that in God there can be nothing contradictory, divided, or isolated, and consequently, that nothing human can be predicated of him; as soon as they are forced to the conclusion, that they have no right to transport any earthly conception beyond the limits of the earthly world, through which it is generated in our soul; they feel how untenable are both these ideas, in the form in which they originally apprehended them; they are no longer able to reproduce them with any vitality in this form; and hence, they disappear from their minds. But no positive unbelief, not even positive doubt is hereby expressed; but while the childish form vanishes, like the known, sensible coefficient, the unknown quantity remains in the soul, like that of which the former was the coefficient; and it now becomes the problem to ascertain its value, by combining it with some new coefficient, and thus to bring it to a higher, actual consciousness. But in the working of this problem, faith is always supposed, even when no solution satisfactory to rigid speculation is obtained. For although the unknown quantity is

not represented by any determinate value, it coöperates in all the mental operations. It was, accordingly, very far from the intention of the author to indicate by these words, that there was ever a time when he was an unbeliever or an atheist. And he only could have so misunderstood him who never felt in his own mind the tendency of scientific speculation to destroy all anthropomorphitcal conceptions of the Supreme Being,—a tendency which the writings of the most profound Christian Fathers express in very decided terms.” *

The above confession of personal experience sufficiently explains the views of Schleiermacher, in regard to the connexion of speculative conceptions with the essential faith of religion. He admits the difficulty of reconciling what is human and limited in our ideas of God with the results of pure contemplation ; he wishes to enlarge the sphere of piety to its widest possible extent ; so that no speculative embarrassments shall exclude from the province of religion, the “pure in heart,” who are “seeking after God, if haply they may find him” ; but he nowhere controverts the existence of a Living God, or intimates that he renounces that conception himself.

His position, in regard to this subject, will be evident to every attentive reader, from the passages relating to it in his “Discourses,” which I now quote.

* *Reden*, p. 26.

“It here occurs to me, that there may be many among you who will not believe that I can be willing to close my present undertaking with what I have already said, and that I can flatter myself with having completely discussed the essential nature of religion, while I have said nothing concerning immortality, and but little,—and that in an incidental manner,—concerning God. They may suppose that I feel absolutely obliged to treat of both of these subjects, and to represent to you your own unhappiness, if they are not the objects of your faith; since with many religious persons they have been held as the cardinal points of piety. But I do not fall in with your opinion on either of these topics. For, in the first place, I by no means admit the fact, that I have said so little concerning God, and nothing concerning immortality; for it is my firm belief that *they are both involved in all that I have suggested to you, with regard to the primitive element of religion*, and that it would have been impossible for me to have expressed myself as I have, had I not always presupposed the idea of God and of immortality, just as it is only when we speak of religion that these ideas are presented to the mind. In the second place, I am quite as far from admitting that they are in the right, who regard the conception and doctrinal exhibition of God and of immortality,—*as they are usually received*,—as the fundamental points of religion. For, according to what I have before shown, neither of these conceptions belongs to religion, any further than as it falls within the sphere of feeling, and immediate consciousness. But the ideas of God and immortality, as they are presented in the doctrinal statements to which I allude, are merely speculative notions; hence many, nay, perhaps most of you, believe that you have a firm conviction of both or at least of one of these notions, without on that account, laying claim to the character of religious men. These speculative notions, accordingly, in them-

selves possess no greater value in religion, than we ascribe to other speculative notions in general. But that you may not imagine that I am deterred from uttering an express declaration of my views on this point, through fear of the danger of speaking upon it, before a settled definition of the words 'God' and 'Existence' has been established, and universally admitted to be valid among our thinking men; and that you may not suppose, on the other hand, that I am playing a part with you, and in order to become all things to all men, am willing to pass over with apparent indifference, that which, in reality, I deem of far greater importance than I am disposed to confess; I will fully explain myself in relation to it, and endeavor to show you that my best and deepest convictions are in accordance with the assertions, which I have just made.

"I request you to call to mind, in the first place, that no feeling can justly be regarded as an element of piety, in which we are affected merely by what is individual as such, without at the same time being subject to the influence of the Whole, *considered as the manifestation of God*; and consequently it is not the individual and the finite, but God himself, in whom alone the separate is one and all, that enters into the life of our being,—and in like manner, it is not this or that faculty,—but our whole nature, with which we oppose ourselves to the universe, at the same time that we are in its bosom, and hence that which is immediately divine in us, which is awakened by feeling and called forth into action. How then can any one assert, that I have described a religion without God, when I have in fact portrayed nothing else than the immediate and original being of God in ourselves through the elementary feelings which I have pointed out? Or is not God the Supreme and only Unity? Is it not God alone, before whom and in whom all that is individual disappears? And when you look upon the universe as a whole, as a comprehensive total-

ity, can you do this otherwise than as in God? If this is not the case, I beg you to show me some other standard according to which the Supreme Being, the Primitive and Eternal Existence, can be distinguished from the temporal, the individual, and the secondary? But in no other way than through those emotions which the universe awakens within us, do we pretend to attain to a consciousness of God in immediate feeling, and hence it is in this way only that we have spoken of him. Would you therefore call in question the claims of this feeling to be a consciousness of God, a possession of the Divine Being; I can then impart to you no further instruction or explanation; I can only say, that whoever denies this,—I will pass no judgment concerning his intellectual condition, for that has nothing to do with our present discussion,—but considered in relation to his habitual mode of feeling, I cannot but regard him as a godless man. For it has even been boasted of science, that it comprises an immediate knowledge concerning God, which is the source of all other knowledge, but the question which is now before us does not relate to science, but to religion. But that mode of obtaining a knowledge of God, to a certain degree, which is boasted of by so many, and which I also should commend to your attention, is neither the idea of God, which you place at the summit of all knowledge, as the absolute unity from which every thing proceeds, and on which all being depends, nor is it the feeling of God, which we possess in our inward consciousness; and as it certainly falls far short of the demands of science, it also holds a subordinate rank in relation to piety, because it is only a speculative notion. A speculative notion artificially compounded of different elements which are called the attributes of God, and which, taken together, are nothing else than the comprehension and analysis of the various modes in which the unity of the individual and the whole is expressed in our

feeling. For no one will deny that precisely in this manner, the different attributes of God correspond to the individual feelings, and others of a similar character, the description of which has been already given, and is now omitted. Hence, I cannot avoid bringing the same objection to this speculative notion, which I have before expressed against speculative notions in general, in relation to religion, namely, that a great degree of piety can exist without them, and that, in fact, they are not formed until after piety itself has been made the subject of contemplation. The abstract conception of God, to be sure, as it is usually formed, is not in the same condition with the other speculative notions to which I have referred ; since the idea of God is represented as supreme and presiding over all others, and yet, when it is derived, in too great a degree from human relations, and God is conceived of as personally exercising thought and volition, it is brought down into the sphere of opposition and controversy. Hence, also, it appears natural that in proportion as our conception of God is founded on human analogies, it is easy for a contrary conception to be presented in opposition to it, in which the Supreme Being is represented not as personally exercising thought and volition, but as the universal necessity, exalted above all personal attributes, and producing and combining every mode of thought and existence. And nothing seems more unwarrantable than for the adherents of the one conception, to charge those with a godless spirit, who repelled by the fear of anthropomorphism, have taken refuge in the other ; or for those on the other hand, to accuse their opponents of adopting an idolatrous service, and to regard their piety as without value, on account of the human character of their conceptions of God. A man may be truly religious, whether he incline to one of these conceptions or the other ; but his religious spirit, the consciousness of God in his inward

feeling, must be better than the conception which he has formed ; and the more he identifies this with the essence of religion, the less does he understand himself. Consider only with what limitations the Godhead is represented in one of these conceptions, and again, how frigid and lifeless in the other, and in both cases, to a greater extent, in proportion as importance is attached to the letter ; and you will confess, that both are defective ; and as neither corresponds to its object, so neither can be a proof of personal religion, except so far as there is a previous ground for it in the mind itself, but compared with which it remains far behind ; and moreover, that rightly understood, each of these two represents at least one element of feeling, but that neither has any value, unless this is at its foundation. Is it not clear, moreover, that many take for granted and believe in such a God, but who are any thing but pious ; and also that this conception can never be the germ from which piety springs up, because it possesses no independent life in its own nature, but must obtain a quickening influence in the sphere of feeling. Accordingly, it cannot be maintained that the admission of one or the other of these conceptions in and for itself can be taken as the sign of a more or less perfect religion. On the contrary, they will both be modified, according to the different degrees in which the religious sentiment is cultivated. And this I would commend to your attention ; for I know of nothing further which I can offer on this point to establish an understanding between us.” *

“ I have felt obliged to say thus much in order that you may not misunderstand my opinion, with regard to these two conceptions ; but for a still stronger reason, also, that you and others may not be deceived on this subject, and imagine that

* *Reden*, pp. 109–113.

all are despisers of religion who cannot reconcile themselves with the personality of the Supreme Being, as it is commonly represented. I am persuaded that I have said nothing which can weaken the conception of the personality of God, where it is already held; nor will any one reject the almost inevitable necessity of admitting it, because he has been made acquainted with the origin of this necessity. There have never been among truly religious men, zealots, enthusiasts, or fanatics for this notion. And so far, as indeed has often been the case, as atheism has been understood to mean nothing but hesitation and uncertainty in regard to this conception, the sincerely pious will view the existence of this around them with great composure; and there has always been something which they deem far more irreligious, as indeed it is, namely—the want of an immediate consciousness of the Godhead in the feelings of the soul. They will be the slowest to believe that any man in fact can be entirely destitute of religion; for before such a person can exist, they know, that he must be totally deprived of feeling, and degraded, with the peculiar attributes of his being, into a mere animal; since he only, in their opinion, who is so deeply degraded, can lose the consciousness of God in the universe and in ourselves, of the Divine Life and Energy by which all things subsist.” *

Such are the principal passages in the “Discourses,” on which, I suppose, the accusation of Atheism or Pantheism against Schleiermacher has been founded. How far this accusation is sustained by the language adduced in its support, may now be decided by the reader. I ought not, however,

* *Reden*, pp. 117, 118.

to omit the explanatory Note of Schleiermacher himself.

“ This whole discussion, I hope, will gain new light from what I have said on the subject in the ‘ Christian Faith,’ and in like manner the exposition there made must find its completion here. And since any one can compare the two passages for himself, it is hardly necessary for me to vindicate myself against the conjecture, for I will not call it the accusation which has been brought against me, on account of this Discourse, by some highly honored individuals,—a part of whom are now in their graves,—*as if I preferred for myself to conceive of the Supreme Being under the impersonal form*; and this has been sometimes called my Atheism and sometimes my Spinozism. But I thought that it was in the genuine spirit of Christianity to look for piety wherever it could be found, and to recognise it under whatever form it might appear. At least, I find that Christ enjoined this upon his disciples, and that Paul also, not only among the Jews and their associates, but at Athens, in the company of the heathen, pursued the same course. But while I expressed the conviction with the most unsuspecting frankness, that it was very far from being the same thing, whether one could not adopt for himself a specific mode of representing the Supreme Being, or whether he actually denied his existence, and rejected all piety, I did not think to protest against all the consequences which might be drawn from it. I entirely forgot how often it is the case that he who is going in a straightforward direction, seems to be inclining towards the left hand, by one who himself is going towards the right. But whoever will consider at least the few words concerning Pantheism which may be found in the passage referred to in my ‘ Christian Faith,’ will free me from all suspicion of material

Pantheism, and with a tolerable degree of candor will also find how an individual can regard it, on the one hand, as almost indispensable to the highest degree of piety, for him to adopt the conception of a personal God,—at all times, for instance, when it is required to interpret his immediate religious emotions to himself, or to others,—or when the heart is absorbed in intimate communion with the Supreme Being,—and how the same individual, on the other hand, can acknowledge the essential imperfections of this conception, nay, can point out the doubtful elements, which it involves, unless it has been purified by the most exact and thorough scrutiny. The most profound thinkers among the Fathers of the Church were always intent on this purification. If we bring together their declarations intended to destroy whatever was human and limited in the form of personality, it will appear, that, all things considered, we may as well assert that they denied personality to God, as that they ascribed it to him; and that, moreover, since it is so difficult to conceive of a personality as strictly infinite and impassible, it behoves us to make a great distinction between a personal and a Living God. It is the latter conception alone which properly distinguishes from material Pantheism, and from blind, atheistic necessity. But the manner, in which one wavers within this limit, in relation to personality, must be left to the creative power of his imagination and to his dialectic conscience; and if a sense of religion be united, they will mutually guard each other. If the imagination inclines to the formation of a too human personality, the dialectic conscience will sound the alarm, and prevent the hazardous consequences; and if this, on the other hand, attempts to limit conception within too narrow bounds, by its negative formulas, the former will assert the validity of its own peculiar claims. I was called upon, in this connexion, to remind the reader, that if one form of con-

ception in and for itself does not exclude all piety, neither any more does the other form, in and for itself, necessarily imply it. For how many individuals there are, in whose life piety has little weight or influence, yet to whom this conception is indispensable, as the universal supplement of their series of causality which is broken off in both directions. And how many, on the other hand, exhibit the deepest piety, who in their expressions concerning the Supreme Being do not always correctly develop the conception of personality." *

The statements of Schleiermacher, it will now be seen, do not call in question the fact that "he was a believer in the living God ;" on the contrary, they confirm it ; they do not, indeed, give us an account of the conceptions which he entertained in regard to the mysteries of the divine nature ; but they aim to show that a religious faith in God may be cherished, independent of the human, personal form, in which he has been commonly represented.

Before proceeding to the quotation of passages which express the positive ideas entertained by Schleiermacher concerning the Deity, I must notice a misapprehension in one of your "Notes," of too serious a character to be overlooked. You assert, (Discourse, p. 44,) that according to Schleiermacher, "the idea of a personal God is pure mythology." The passage, to which you refer without quoting it, contains no authority for this assertion. I need only bring it forward, to set aside the charge.

After declaring that it is the one and all of religion to consider our whole being and life, "as a being and life in God and through God," Schleiermacher continues, "To represent the Godhead as a separate and insulated object, so that the appearance can scarcely be avoided of making him susceptible of passive impressions like other objects,—this is only a designation, and although one indispensable to many and welcome to all, yet it must ever be viewed with suspicion as fruitful in difficulties, from which our usual phraseology, perhaps, will never be entirely free. To treat this objective conception of the Godhead as actual knowledge, and accordingly to represent the Being of God,—separated from its effects upon us through the medium of the universe—before the world and beyond the world, although for the world, as a science to be formed through religion or in religion,—this is certainly, for the sphere of religion, only a barren mythology, a more complete development too easily misunderstood of that which is only an aid to conception and description, as if it were in fact, the essential element itself, a mature product of the genuine soil." *

The meaning of Schleiermacher may be illustrated, if necessary, by his own explanatory Note.

"By mythology, I understand, in general, the exhibition of a purely ideal object in an historical form. In this sense it

* *Reden*, p. 59.

appears to me that in strict analogy with the polytheistic, we have also a monotheistic and Christian mythology. It is not essential to this that the dialogues of Divine Persons should be set forth, as is done in the poetry of Klopstock, and elsewhere. It may be found even in the most rigid forms of doctrine, where changes are represented as taking place in the Divine Being,—as for instance, the adoption of decrees, in reference to some past event or to some earlier decree; to say nothing of the peculiar divine decrees which are at the ground of the common conceptions of the efficacy of prayer. The representations of many of the divine attributes have this historical form and are accordingly mythological. Take the attribute of divine mercy. According to the usual conception, it is exercised only, when we separate the divine volition which alleviates evil from that which ordained it; for if we regard both of these volitions as identical, the one will not be the limit of the other, but the divine will which appoints evil, appointing it only in a certain proportion; and then the conception of mercy is entirely destroyed. In the conception of the veracity of God, in like manner, a separation is made between the idea of promise and of fulfilment; and both taken together compose an historical transaction. For if we regard the act of promise as the same with that of fulfilment, the conception of the divine veracity is reduced to the agreement of several divine properties with one of their manifestations; and thus an historical element comes in. But if we regard the active property and its manifestation as one and the same, the distinct conception of the divine veracity can scarcely be maintained. This train of thought might be pursued to a much greater length. Now I do not find fault with such representations on account of the names which are applied to them, in themselves considered. I admit that they are indispensable, for without their aid, we could not speak on the

subject, with any reference to the investigation of more or less correct views. If there is no danger from their use in the department of scientific theology, which has for its great problem to resolve religion into its everlasting principles, divested of all historical and temporary forms, they are equally indispensable in the sphere of religious poetry and eloquence. We then unite with those who are of kindred feelings with ourselves, and who value such representations chiefly for their fitness to embody and communicate religious sentiments, which contain within themselves the correction for all deficiencies of expression. I speak of them in the way of censure as barren mythology, only when they are considered as imparting exact knowledge, and are held up as the essence of religion, when in truth, they are only a necessary aid to our infirmities." *

I will now adduce some passages from other writings of Schleiermacher, which explain his own conceptions of the Deity, and may help the reader to decide whether he is justly liable to the charge of Atheism or of Pantheism.

In regard to the power of the human mind to form an idea of the Divine nature, and the views in which we may at last repose, he speaks as follows. The passage explains the character of the difficulties, which were felt by Schleiermacher, in ascribing human attributes to God.

"We can think and speak of God, only in a human manner. Whatever our reason presents as the necessary attributes

* *Reden*, pp. 126, 127.

of the Infinite Being, can be derived by it only from a comparison with our own being; whatever we discover of his mode of action, in the course of the world, we can express only in those words which we use also to designate human excellence; and even, in like manner, the Scriptures can speak to us of the Eternal only in comparisons and images. We acknowledge with humility, that in this way, all our knowledge of God must be very limited and imperfect; but if, notwithstanding this, we would maintain the holy privilege of gaining purer and more living conceptions of the Eternal Being, we are so much the more obliged to use the most earnest endeavors, that this knowledge should not, by our own fault, be left in unnecessary obscurity, and thus the abuse of the privilege deprive us of its enjoyment. Let us take heed, that we do not transfer to God every thing which belongs to human excellence; because much of this pertains merely to the relations of men with one another; and these are very different from the relation which God sustains towards his creatures. Let us be careful not to combine with the essential attributes of the Supreme Being, that which clearly springs from human imperfection. It is easy to give these directions, but it is difficult to apply them, even with all the means at our command. The mistakes, which we thus fall into, are the source of the most dangerous errors in religion; of those, namely, which exert an immediate, injurious influence on our practical relations with God. How much that is human and unworthy, do we find in the conceptions of most Christians in regard to the wisdom and love, the long-suffering and placability of God, his delight in what is good, and his displeasure at evil! What mournful consequences, what perversion of heart and life is produced, as soon as we neglect to measure the correctness and value of these conceptions by the infallible standard of our moral nature! And if we are preserved

from such consequences, there still remains a great evil, namely, that an incorrect view of the world is formed from false conceptions of God. God and the world, his attributes and dispensations,—these are ideas, which are inseparably united, which materially correct and elucidate, or perplex and obscure each other.” *

The views of Schleiermacher concerning the relation of man to God may be understood from the passage which I now quote. Whether these views are to be regarded as a substitute for Christianity, or as an expressive commentary on the doctrine of Jesus, must be determined by the good judgment of the reader.

“ Why is it that the sight of a pious man makes such a deep and peculiar impression on all who are in a quiet and sober frame of mind ? They cannot refrain from an emotion of reverence in the presence of one whom, in every other respect, they may regard as far beneath them ; they are humbled before his elevated feelings, and deem themselves honored and exalted by such humiliation ; they are penetrated with the sense of a happy and enviable condition, even when they feel that they are incapable, and perhaps, unworthy of it themselves. This effect is exhibited at all times, and under all circumstances ; both when we find a pure and reasonable religion, and when the knowledge of the Eternal is mingled with many errors, and the essential principles of piety are combined with superstitious opinions ; every where, even the rudest minds, in their better moments, give their testimony to the dignity and elevation of the pious sentiment.—

* *Sämmtliche Werke, Predigten*, (Berlin, 1834,) vol. i. pp. 97, 98.

“This effect is produced by that which constitutes the inward essence of piety. The thought of God ever accompanies the pious man; and not only the thought; every where he sees and feels the Eternal Being; and because all which he thinks or does is referred immediately to this one great thought, nothing around or in him can be trivial and insignificant; and with the earthly life which he has in common with others, he leads also another life which is heavenly and divine. Every thing is a proof of this. His fidelity and probity bear a peculiar form, because all the desires which could tempt him are brought to silence by this divine sentiment. His tranquillity is not disturbed by hope, or by the need of hope; for it is founded on the consciousness that the chief business of his life is continued uninterruptedly through all circumstances. His love needs no outward impulse, no confirmation; for it is the natural reflection of the love of God which is ever present to his soul. It is this, the intercourse and walk with God, which makes such a man the object of holy reverence. What then is the inward essence of this piety?—

“The pious man is one, who has found the Lord, in so far as he is not far from any one of us. This does not mean, that he has gained peculiar knowledge of what we are accustomed to call the essence or the nature of the Godhead; or that he has received a revelation of mysteries on this subject, which lie beyond the ordinary reach of the human understanding. Do not envy those who by familiarity with systematic reflection, by the employment of the intellect with the grounds and the connexion of our common knowledge, have carried it so far that they can express their opinion on this point, in manifold and regular words, and can propose, dispute, and decide a thousand questions, one more perplexed and subtile than the other. These are all words, and nothing more. Not only the common understanding, but every hu-

man understanding is here impotent ; in this respect, God dwells for us in a light, to which no man can approach. We have no eye to see him, no sense to feel him ; he is at an infinite distance from all of us ; between the limited understanding, and such an infinite object, there is fixed an eternal and impassable chasm. But could even a few select individuals attain to certain knowledge on these mysteries, it would, strictly speaking, form no part of piety. For where Paul uttered the words of our text, human wisdom, more than any where else, had sought to attain a summit, which is too high for man to breathe in ; many investigations had there been instituted on the nature and attributes of the Divine Being ; but Paul did not regard them as a useful preparation for his hearers. He speaks to them of the times of ignorance, in which they had lived, and which God would overlook ; but it is an ignorance, which is to be expelled, not by a change of opinions, but by a change of heart. These useless gropings, these barren words have never led a man into the way of piety ; though at all times, many sunk in earthly feelings, have thus made the Godhead an object of their consideration. But this is dangerous to piety. Your heart does not share in the dry and cold investigations of the understanding ; and though I will not say, that you would thereby become unfitted for salutary intercourse with the Godhead, you might yet have given place, instead of these vain endeavors, to other thoughts which would have nourished your religious sense. No better do they succeed, who, in this way, seek Christ, and desire to penetrate with their understanding into all the mysteries of his relation as mediator between God and man. They have no leader, and the Scripture, in which they should search for totally different things, abandons them. On the point to which piety elevates men, and on which we now regard it, you will find few of those who have the most earn-

estly pursued such investigations, and they surely, at least have not been helped upward by them.—

To have found the Lord is rather to have found his Will,—the Will which is a law to us, and which we are to accomplish. This is the relation, in which the Lord is not far from any one of us.—But how, you will say, to have found the Will of God, which we should accomplish—is this to find the Lord? This the essence of piety? This the communion of man with God? Does not our conscience announce this to us? Does it not speak to all men, without distinction? What then becomes of the distinction between the pious man, and the righteous man? It is in this way. Conscience announces to you the will of God, and the living knowledge of this, is the essential and peculiar element of our communion with God; conscience announces it to all men; and yet there is herein a difference between the righteous man who is pious, and him who is not; it depends on this, whether we regard our conscience as the voice of God, or only as the voice of our human wisdom. He who only does the last endeavors to bring the conscience, like every thing which belongs to the natural endowments of the understanding, under certain rules, and thus to cultivate and perfect it; conscience with its decisions becomes the object of a peculiar science.—He, on the contrary, who regards his conscience as the voice of God, instead of observing it only here and there, will deem it holy; instead of artfully getting the better of it, he will devoutly inquire into its decisions; instead of frittering it away, he will only strive to exercise it.

“ Thus the pious man goes on every day of his life, seeking and finding the Lord. It is not a work which he completes at once; but one which is constantly renewed; and in which he always advances to a greater degree of perfection. His sense of what the will of God is concerning him in all the

relations of life, ever becomes more correct and refined ; his delight in the wise government of the Supreme ever grows purer and more confident ; his immediate experience of the existence of a divine kingdom on earth becomes more varied and joyful ; and the peculiar peace of his heart, which rests on this, is more and more firmly grounded.” *

I will give one more extract of a similar import, and close the quotations which have immediate reference to the views of Schleiermacher concerning the Deity.

“There can hardly be a greater or more noble description of the high calling of the Christian, than that given by the Apostle Peter, in the commencement of his second Epistle, where he says, that ‘ we might become partakers of the divine nature.’

“This is, certainly, something to which man in the consciousness of his weakness and his transitory being can scarcely elevate himself. If then we would answer the question, What is the divine nature of which we may become partakers, can we do other than refer to the declaration of John, God is love, and also consider, at the same time, how the nature and essence of God is described to us by the Apostle Paul, as an Eternal and Unchangeable Power. Both of these ideas are combined by Peter, when he says, we may become partakers of the Divine Nature. His meaning is, first, that we may become partakers of the love, which composes the essence of God, and then of the eternal and unchangeable power, or omnipotence of God, which distinguishes the Creator from all creatures. A love, which were not omnipotent, could not be the eternal and unchangeable power, and could

* *Predigten*, vol. i. pp. 154—160, 163.

not belong to the divine nature; and omnipotence, which were any thing other than love in its whole essence, could not be the eternal and beneficent fountain, from which alone all good gifts proceed. Is omnipotent love then the Divine Nature? we know what the Apostle justly calls ‘this exceeding great and precious promise.’—

“The eternal and unchangeable power of love in the Divine Being is resisted by nothing from without or from within; nothing can resist it; because it is this only by which the whole world was brought into being and still subsists. But for us, much, nay the most, lies beyond the limits of our power; hence our partaking of the divine nature can consist only in this, that within the sphere which is produced and which subsists by the communication of our power, the living energy of our love should manifest itself as omnipotent and irresistible.” *

I have now brought forward every thing which I deem important,—so far as the limits of this Letter will permit,—that has immediate reference to the opinions of Schleiermacher concerning the Divine Nature and the relations of man with God. They will be still further elucidated, however, by many of the passages which I shall produce in another connexion.

The views of Schleiermacher on the doctrine of immortality will form the next topic of the present discussion.

* *Predigten*, vol. iv. pp. 473—476.

You assert (Remarks, p. 39.) that "according to him, religion consisting in the renouncing of personality, and the blending of the individual with the One and All, the pious man, in his union with the Infinite and Eternal, enjoys while on earth everlasting life, and this notion of everlasting life, he puts in direct contrast with that commonly entertained." "It would be idle to inquire," you also remark, (p. 41.) "what hopes and what immortality Schleiermacher would hold out to a being whose personal existence is to cease with death."

The inference would be drawn from this statement by those who relied on your authority, that in the opinion of Schleiermacher, the everlasting life of the soul is limited to the present state of being, and does not involve the continuance of personal existence in a higher world. The real opinions of Schleiermacher on this subject will appear from his own declarations, which I am about to produce.

The promise of immortality, according to the views which he cherished, relates to the condition of the soul, rather than to the place of its existence. Its enjoyment is guarantied to the children of God, as soon as they are in a state of reconciliation with their Father in heaven. He who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him ; he has passed from death unto life ; his fellowship is with the spirits of the just made perfect ; he is no longer a stranger

and a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints ; he is a member of the household of God, of which the whole family, whether in heaven or on earth, is composed ; he is conscious that he lives in the bosom of Eternity ; he has commenced the enjoyment of an immortal existence, which no change in time, nor suffering, nor death can interrupt.

The attainment of this state depends on rigid and unyielding conditions. He that would gain the spiritual life, thus described, must renounce his attachment to the earthly, selfish, and sensual life, which is led by the sinner ; he must live, not after the flesh, but after the spirit ; nay, he must cease to live, that Christ may live in him.

The carnal man makes himself the centre, not God ; his own individuality is more important to him than the universe ; his own will is in conflict with the divine and everlasting law ; he regards his own interests, more than the infinite goodness, truth, and beauty, to which the soul aspires ; his faith in immortality is founded on principles of selfishness ; and he values the loftiest hope of the spirit, from considerations of personal advantage. This faith is not of a religious character. It interferes with the true aim of religion, and must be renounced.

Not so the genuine hope of immortality. That is built on an act of self-surrendry. We must become dead to the world, and alive to God, before

we can cherish it, in its deep and vital power. But the self-renunciation, on which Schleiermacher insists, by no means, implies the renunciation of our individual being. When Paul was crucified with Christ, he was not annihilated. The "old man which was corrupt" was slain, but the "new man" was created in true holiness. This change did not destroy the conscious identity of Paul. The ideas of Schleiermacher on this point will be understood from a brief summary of the general principles, which were at the foundation of his views of the universe and of life.

According to these, every form of existence is under the dominion of two antagonist powers. The most general laws of the material universe are those of attraction and expansion. Life consists in an unceasing play of opposite forces. The human soul is not free from this great law. It has its peculiar subsistence in the action of two opposing impulses. In obedience to the one, it seeks to establish a separate, individual existence, to draw within its own sphere every thing which surrounds it, and to weave every foreign element into the texture of its own peculiar being. The other impulse, on the contrary, produces a dread of opposing the vast Whole, the desire of self-annihilation, in devotion to a superior being. Every thing which is done or felt, in relation to our individual existence, every

thing which we speak of as enjoyment or possession, is the product of the first tendency. Every thing on the other hand which does not concern individual life, which is common to all being, is the product of the second. We are under the influence of this, whenever we recognise in our course of thought and action the existence of order and law, necessity and system, fitness and duty, and surrender ourselves to their power.

No material object can subsist by means of one of the two forces of physical nature. Neither can the soul subsist by means of one of the original functions of the spiritual nature. The perfection of the soul depends on the maintenance of a just harmony between these tendencies. Every personal and individual endeavor, unless balanced by the opposite direction, takes the form of an insatiable devotion to sense; is intent only on the selfish interests of life; strives to crown it with earthly gratifications; and to preserve and exercise it in freshness and vigor. The persons, therefore, in whom this tendency is predominant, constantly vibrating between desire and enjoyment, do not pass beyond the perception of what is individual; they are absorbed in self-seeking endeavors; and they cannot attain to a sense of the primitive and universal character of Humanity. The opposite class are impelled too strongly in the contrary direction;

they attain no firm and decided individuality ; they exercise no inward creative power ; their activity is wasted in barren contemplation, and, accordingly, they have no perception of the genuine life of the world.

The reconciliation of these extremes is the office of the wise teacher. He strives to unite these tendencies in the complete circle which is the emblem of eternity and perfection. Such a teacher is most needed by the earthly and sensual. He would make them comprehend the inconsistency of their desires and pursuits with the highest elements of Humanity. He would set in opposition to their degraded, animal enjoyments, an enjoyment of another character, the object of which is not separate and finite, but the One in All, and the All in One, and which knows no limit but that of the universe, so far as it is brought within the grasp of the spirit. He would point out to their blind and restless self-love a higher principle, by means of which, in the midst of earthly interests and cares, they may place their affections on the Supreme and Eternal, and thus he would reveal to their fickle and passionate desires, a tranquil and secure possession.*

This state of mind, according to Schleiermacher, is the commencement of Eternal Life ; it may be obtained, to a certain extent, by the truly religious

* See *Reden*, pp. 4-6.

man on earth ; but its complete enjoyment is to be realized in a future world.

I will now quote the passage from the "Discourses," which has been relied on to prove that he regarded "the belief and desire of personal immortality as wholly irreligious."

"I come now to the second point, which I was to consider in this relation, namely, immortality. And here I cannot conceal my opinion, that there is even more in the usual mode of employing this doctrine, which is not consistent with the essential nature of piety. The manner, in which every religious man maintains an unchangeable and eternal existence in himself, I have already explained to you. For when our feeling no longer clings to what is individual, but is absorbed in the consciousness of our relation to God, in which all that is individual and transitory disappears, it is then composed, not of the Temporal, but of the Eternal ; and it may justly be said, that the religious life is that condition of the soul, in which we have discarded and sacrificed whatever is mortal, and have actually commenced the enjoyment of immortality.*

* This idea is admirably expressed by one of our most distinguished writers, in a passage which I cannot forbear transcribing.

"Death is not the momentous change we imagine ; it is neither the close of life, nor the beginning of immortal existence. The change which makes man religious, should date the time when the 'corruptible puts on incorruption and the mortal immortality.'—The heaven of the blest begins, when they begin to feel the peace, which religion gives ; death will only place them where the shadows of earth shall no longer surround them ; they will go on in the same path which they trod below ; or rather in the same direction, for they shall ascend with 'wings as eagles,' and go on rejoicing in

But the conception, which is entertained of immortality by the generality of men and their aspirations with regard to it, appear to me to be irreligious, and directly opposed to the spirit of piety ; nay even their wish for immortal life has no other ground than a disinclination towards that which is the peculiar object of religion. You have seen that religion always aims to enlarge the narrow limits of our personality, until they are gradually lost in the Infinite ; so that, *while we cherish our consciousness of the universe*, we should also, as far as possible, become one with it ; they, on the contrary, strive against this ; they would not be freed from their present limitation ; they wish for nothing more than to manifest it forever ; and are anxious to secure the claims of their personality. Hence, it is far from their wish to seize the only occasion, which death presents to them, to escape from its shackles ; but are rather solicitous how this will be continued beyond the present life ; and at the best, their hopes are directed to more wide-reaching eyes, and an improved organization. But God speaks to them as it is written, ‘ He that will lose his life for my sake shall find it, and he that will save his life shall lose it.’ The life which they wish to save is not one which is to be saved ; for if the eternity of their individual person ought to concern them, why are they not as solicitous in regard to that which it has been, as with regard to that which it shall be ? And what avails to them the future, when they have no power over the past ? The more they long after an immortality, which in fact is no immortality, and of which they are not capable even of forming a conception,—for who can succeed in the attempt to imagine a temporal form of existence enlarged to Infinity,—the more do they

their glorious flight through the boundless heavens.”—W. B. O. PEABODY, in *Offering of Sympathy*, by F. PARKMAN, p. 86.

surrender of the immortality, which they might always possess; and in addition to this, they lose their mortal life, by the indulgence of thoughts which agitate and torment them in vain. Would they but endeavor to renounce their life from love to God! Would they but strive even here to annihilate their personality, in order to live in the One and All! He who has learned to be more than himself, knows that he should lose but little, were he to lose himself. He only who, by this self-renunciation, has attained as far as possible, to a living harmony with the universe, and whose soul is filled with a grander and holier longing, has a right to speak of the hopes which are presented to us by death and of the infinity to which it will infallibly elevate us." *

It is evident from this very passage,—which has been referred to in proof of the contrary supposition,—that the state of union with God, which Schleiermacher regarded as the characteristic of Everlasting Life, implies the continuance of our conscious existence in another world. The idea may be further illustrated by the explanatory Note, a part of which was quoted in my first Letter.

"This passage has met with a fate very similar to that of my remarks on the personality of God. It was directed, like them, against a limited conception, and one which upon a strict analysis, displays many impure elements, and like them, it has excited great misunderstanding. For here also it has been thought that I would degrade the hope of immortality in the prevalent sense of the word, and by representing it as a weakness, would oppose its influence. But this was

* *Reden*, pp. 118—120.

not the place to discuss the truth of the matter, or to set forth the peculiar views which, as a Christian, I cherish in regard to it. These are exhibited in the Second Part of my 'Christian Faith,' and the representations given in both places should serve as the completion of each other. It was only requisite here to answer the question, whether this hope was so closely connected with a religious disposition, that they stand or fall together. But how could I avoid answering this in the negative, since it is admitted by almost every one, at the present day, that even the ancient covenant people were unacquainted with this hope, in the earlier periods of their history, and since it can easily be shown that in a state of deep religious emotion, the soul is more absorbed in the present moment, than concerned with the future. But it is too severe, it is thought, that the hope, which has prevailed to so wide an extent among the most elevated characters, of renewing their individual existence in a permanent form, should be ascribed by this Discourse to the lowest degree of self-love, when it was so easy to derive it from the love of objects, in which the heart is deeply interested. I can only say, that while the various forms, in which the hope of immortality, as the highest self-consciousness of the Spirit, has appeared, were floating before my eyes, it seemed natural and unavoidable, in this place also, to warn the adversaries of the faith, against confounding with the subject-matter itself, any of the modes of conception, in which it has been clothed, and especially those which betray the most evident signs of a concealed, subordinate interest. At the same time, I wished to show, that the problem should not be stated in the manner that would most readily occur to one whose consciousness was limited to his own personality, and shackled by individual affinities, but to one, in whom personal interest is refined and purified by being made subordinate to the self-consciousness

which has been elevated to the perception of the universal and everlasting elements of human nature. But it was necessary on the other hand,—in order to avoid interminable discussions, which, the more they are spun out, become more foreign to the main subject in question,—to point out to the adversaries of the faith, that there could be no religious interest in the discussion of the matter, except with those, who have already built up in their own souls that higher life, which is inspired by genuine piety, and which is the only true victory over death. If I have expressed with too much severity, my aversion to the self-deception growing out of a petty and exclusive turn of mind, which prides itself on embracing the doctrine of immortality and on being governed by the hopes and fears which it involves, I can only answer in defence, that this was not said, as a rhetorical flourish, but has always been one of the strongest feelings of my heart. I have no more earnest wish than that every man when he undertakes an estimate of his piety, could see himself,—not only as Plato expresses it, that the soul should appear before the judges of the invisible world, divested of all the artificial apparel, which has been thrown around it by the outward relations of life,—but also, after he has renounced such claims to an endless duration that he may determine, when he has contemplated himself as he is, whether these claims are any thing more than the titles, with which the potentates of the earth often deem it necessary to decorate themselves, to countries which they never have possessed, and never will possess. Whoever finds the eternal life which I have indicated in his own soul, after this divesture of its temporary costume, will experience no difficulty in adopting the views which are presented at the close of the Discourse, as well as in my exposition of the subject in my ‘Christian Faith.’—Finally, the parallel here pointed out between the two ideas, God and immortality,

ought not to be overlooked in considering the different modes of conception. For as the conception of the human personality of God usually presupposes a consciousness that is not morally pure, the same thing may be assumed in the conception of immortality, which represents it after the manner of the Elysian fields, only as a new earth of greater beauty and extent. And as we must admit an essential difference between the inability to form such a human and personal conception of God and the denial of the existence of a Living God,—which last alone can be designated as Atheism; in like manner, he who does not incline to such a material conception of immortality is very far from discarding the genuine hope of immortality. And as we may call every man religious who believes in a Living God, we may also call every one religious who believes in the Everlasting Life of the soul, without wishing to define the way or the manner in which it must be conceived.”*

The belief of Schleiermacher in the doctrine of immortality, is set forth in a manner, one would suppose, to prevent any dispute, in the portion of his work on the “Christian Faith,” referred to in the last extract.

“As faith in the continuance of human personality is involved in the belief of the unchangeable union of the Divine Being with human nature in the person of Christ, the Christian is thus inclined to form a definite conception of the condition after death.—

“Faith in the continuance of personal existence is involved in our faith in the Redeemer. For if he ascribes such a

* *Reden*, pp. 140, 141.

continuance to himself, in every thing which he declares concerning his return, or his reunion with his disciples, it follows,—since he could declare this of himself, only as a human person, for as such only could he have communion with his disciples,—that, by virtue of the identity of human nature in him and in ourselves,—the same thing is true in regard also to us. Clearly as this appears, we are still bound to inquire, whether objections to this view are not possible, and if so what they are,—whether against the correctness of the supposition, or the legitimacy of the consequence.

“Objections of the first kind can relate only to a difference in the explanation of the sayings of Christ; and so far could not be examined here, but belong to the art of interpretation. Thus much however may be said here, that if any one was disposed to assert in good faith, that all the declarations of Christ relating to this point are to be understood in a figurative, and not a literal sense, and that he ascribed no personal duration to himself, a faith in Christ, as it has been here set forth, would indeed remain possible,—for though the renunciation of personal duration were, in that case, something in common between Christ and ourselves, the peculiar distinction between Christ and us would not necessarily be taken away on that account,—yet an entire transformation of Christianity would be the effect, if such a mode of interpretation should ever become prevalent in the Church, and lie at the ground of Christian faith. And hence we may suppose, that such an interpretation cannot be made with good faith.

“The case would not vary much, if any one should doubt the legitimacy of the consequence on the ground, that, although Christ ascribes personal duration to himself, he only appropriated this to himself from the prevailing faith, without a decided conviction of his own, and only in this way, as in

other similar cases, made use of the opinion; so that his disclosures on this point are not to be reckoned among those which are so connected with his certainty in regard to his dignity and destination, that unless they are accepted, the latter could not be believed. Moreover, it could hardly be sincerely alleged by any body, that Christ, in this way only, without his own conviction, rejected the view of the Sadducees, and that his faith in the invincible progress of his word was independent of his faith in the continuance of his personality.

“ If then, it cannot be denied that Christ was firmly convinced of this, the only remaining objection that can be advanced is, that from the continuance of his personality, which we must believe with him, no inference can be drawn concerning our own, since his depended only on what was peculiar to himself, on that which exclusively constituted his human person, namely, the union of the Divine Being with human nature; and therefore, so far as the Redeemer is immortal, all other men are not mortal. But this explanation would savor strongly of the heresy of the Docetæ. For the difference between an immortal and a mortal soul cannot consist alone in the fact that one dies; but in every relation must the operations and state of the one be different from those of the other. Hence if the soul of the Redeemer were imperishable and our souls were perishable, it could not justly be said, that as a man, he was in all respects like unto us, sin only excepted. For if it should be said, that it was without doubt the original nature of the human soul to be immortal, but that it had become mortal by the introduction of sin,—this would imply, that the whole original work of God was destroyed by sin, and another substituted in its place. Hence also we must reject the division which some would assume, that indeed all souls have become mortal by

sin, and suffer death with the body, but that the believing, through communion of life with Christ, share in immortality, and with him pass through death into life. For either this rests on a Manichean supposition, that those who do not attain to a communion of life with Christ cannot be immortal; or if others are similar to them by nature, yet their nature must become entirely different by regeneration.

“Nothing therefore remains, but that if we ascribe perfect truth, as the disciples undoubtedly did, to the expression of the Redeemer concerning his own personal duration, then also *all of the human race may expect this duration*. But in this case, accordingly, the Redeemer certainly remains the mediator of immortality, not only for those who shall here believe in him, but for all, without exception. That is, if personal immortality did not belong to human nature, then the union of the Divine Being with human nature in such a personality as that of the Redeemer would not have been possible; and on the other hand, since God has determined to redeem and perfect human nature through such a union, *the individuals of the human race must bear the same immortality in themselves, as that of which the Redeemer was conscious*.

“Such is the true, Christian guaranty of this faith. Every other assurance of it, even if it were more convincing than can be expected after the attempts hitherto made, remains foreign to the Christian as such, until this faith shall be numbered among those conceptions, which constitute the complete and universal conviction of humanity.”*

It is unnecessary to bring forward additional evidence concerning the point to be proved; but it

* *Christliche Glaube*, vol. ii. pp. 517—520.

may not be without interest to dwell a little more at length on the opinions of Schleiermacher on the condition of the soul in the future world. If objections should be presented to his views, it will not be, I suppose, on account of a deficiency of his faith in the doctrine of immortality ; but because he expresses a too confident hope in the prospects of the future.

“ We may expect of the divine justice in regard to every future condition, that it will be adapted to the greatest need of every individual, whether that be the transition from evil to good, or a nearer approach to perfection. But whether this is to be attained by happiness or suffering, must be left entirely to the Supreme Wisdom. We may, however, perceive how the goodness of God which grants what is best to every one, will be most freely shown towards him, who is the most confirmed in goodness. We may conclude from the analogy of the present life, that the deprivation of what is agreeable and adverse circumstances of all kinds, may be an effectual means to bring man to reflection on the fact that the prosperity and enjoyment to which he has sacrificed his conscience cannot be securely attained,—a means to make him sensible of the magnitude of the sacrifice, and thus to restore him to reason, and to obedience to God. We may suppose, that he who has arrived at a certain degree of goodness, will be the soonest freed from the various evils which in the present life are applied to the righteous as trials and proofs, and that he will be fitted to obtain advantages for the attainment of holiness, from all that he experiences, even if it should be unmingled joy.” *

* *Predigten*, vol. i. p. 107.

“If the question be asked, How and in what manner, we remain united with those who have shared this life with us, but who are now among us no more, I answer, in the words of the Apostle, “Our conversation is in heaven.” This is said to us all in the same manner. They, whom the Lord has taken from us, can be regarded as having gone before us, only in so far as their conversation here was in heaven; otherwise they have rather been left behind us in a mournful sense of the terms. What therefore has actually united us with them, while they were yet among us, and by which we remain united with them now that they are no more, is only the fact, that our conversation also is in heaven.

“But what is meant by this expression? We know very well, that when we speak of heaven, we understand no specific place? Heaven to us is no more the solid arch stretched forth over our heads, in which the shining points that give light by night are fixed; neither is it the place in which the Supreme and Eternal Being has his peculiar abode. Those points of light have increased, in the sight of man, to an illimitable host of bodies, like that on which we dwell. With this enlarged conception of the stars, the vault in which they appear, has fallen into an unknown and immeasurable space. We only know that the Supreme and Eternal Being can no more dwell in one than in another specific place, for then if he were not indeed limited to that place, he would bear a different relation to it from that to every other. But we cannot suppose this; for God is alike present to us every where; and his dwelling is every where. But since the time that man arose to the perception of this truth, he must needs gain another point of support for his spirit, or he would lose himself, and his better life. Would not our whole race appear infinitely small and insignificant in the creation, compared with the vast multitude of worlds; and still more so,

every individual for himself? When we ascend to the thought of an illimitable number of worlds, all inhabited by the living and intelligent creatures of God, might we not almost despair, as if we, who perhaps hold one of the lowest degrees in the scale of being, were scarce the objects of his fatherly care and protection? And since we can no more look up into the blue heavens as the special dwelling-place of God, but acknowledge him as present every where; how much more easily can man, who never rises entirely above the influence of material things, lose all sense of the Omnipresent Being; for he is always surrounded by earthly objects, but no longer believes that he must turn away from them, in order to draw near to God. This is the knowledge which puffs up; and, with the increased acquaintance with the world, has crept in a great indifference towards its Author.

“Hence, in the progress of the human mind, the eternal counsel of God for the redemption of man must be fulfilled. He must appear, who could show us a new heaven as the dwelling-place of God on earth; he in whom, since the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him, was to be seen the glory of the Father and his divine essence. He must appear, so that like the ancient generations in the childhood of the world, we might again have a tabernacle of God, a peculiar sanctuary among us, in which the Eternal Being should be enthroned. So therefore did he dwell in him, who has brought life and immortality to light, not contained within him exclusively; but spreading himself from him to the multitude of the faithful, as the Spirit that dwelleth in them; so that we need not seek the Supreme Being, in a specific place at a wide distance from us; nor possess him every where, it is true, but yet always out of ourselves; but should be able to find and enjoy him within ourselves.

“This is the heaven of which the Apostle speaks. The

Redeemer, filled with the power of God, his spiritual presence and nearness in the church, by the spirit which he promised and obtained in prayer from his Father,—this is the heaven, in which we should have our conversation. What the Apostle understands by our conversation in this heaven is of a twofold character. First, the general laws which bind a society of men in their life and conduct, are called their conversation, as the word is here used; and secondly, the whole course of their life, their thoughts, feelings, and actions, as they may be related to those laws. This then is the testimony which the Apostle gives of it, in the name of the whole church, when he says, Our conversation is in heaven. The laws of our life and conduct, the constitution of this community of faith and love in which we are united,—all this is from the heaven, which Christ, the Son of the Highest, has here set forth before us. That we should refer every thing which may form a law of our life, to the Supreme and Eternal, as he has revealed himself to us in his Son; that the heaven, to which we would devote our whole existence, is nothing else, than the uninterrupted spiritual communion with God through his Son; and that we are governed by these holy laws, and renouncing all earthly striving and enjoying, which relates only to our perishable existence in this world, do nothing but build up the kingdom of God on earth, the holy temple in which the Supreme will dwell, since it is no earthly house made with hands, but the spiritual abode of the Eternal spirit in created Spirits;—this life and action, this endeavor and aim,—this is our conversation in heaven.

“Now, when in those infinite regions, we would seek those who have gone before us, if we conceive of them as again in a world, gloriously decorated as it may be, which is given to them as a habitation, and their life refers merely to their outward existence in that world,—this life would still be—how-

ever nobler and less perishable their happiness would then be than now,—it would still be not a conversation in heaven, but on earth. For every thing connected with matter and with space, is perishable and earthly by its nature; and every thing of this kind which draws the soul to itself, may also detach it from what is eternal, and the only genuine and worthy object of its joy and love. For them also, accordingly, there is a conversation in heaven, like our own, which is distinguished from all temporal and earthly life; and this conversation in heaven cannot be maintained by them otherwise than by us; their highest elevation can only be to know the Lord as he is, and to resemble him so far, that they manifest him in their being and action.

“In this way, we remain united with them, provided that we seek the same end, and live after the same law. For there cannot be another or a higher knowledge of God for the human spirit,—of this we are all as certain, as we share with each other from the heart the Christian faith,—than that which dwelt in the Son of God, who could give the testimony as he closed his earthly course, that he had declared to his disciples, every thing which the Father had given him, and which he had learned of the Father. Hence their knowledge and ours can be only one and the same; they, like ourselves, can know nothing higher of the Eternal Creator and Father of all beings, than what the disciple of the Lord has taught us, ‘God is Love.’ And the love of God, which always and every where must be the heaven in our hearts, cannot be there another thing from what it is here; but it is one and the same.

“Since then they who have gone before us, and we who remain behind live in this love of God, and since this is the essential distinction of the only true conversation in heaven, they are united with us, and we are united with them; it is

one and the same spirit which prevails in them and in us ;
 one and the same kingdom of love, to which they and we
 belong ; one and the same heaven, in which they and we
 live." * †

The following extract will be read with interest,
 I am persuaded, not merely as a proof of the
 opinions of Schleiermacher, but on account of the
 beauty and elevation of the views which it presents.
 It is taken from a Discourse on these words : " And
 this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of
 all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing,
 but should raise it up again at the last day. And
 this is the will of him that sent me, that every one

* *Predigten*, vol. ii. pp. 587—591.

† The simple pathos, with which this strictly Christian conception is expressed by Charles Wesley, is probably familiar to the reader.

" The saints on earth and those above
 But one communion make ;
 Joined to their Lord in bonds of love,
 All of his grace partake.

One family, we dwell in him ;
 One church above, beneath ;
 Though now divided by the stream,
 The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God,
 To his command we bow,
 Part of the host have crossed the flood,
 And part are crossing now."

which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

“ Among the declarations of our Redeemer on this subject, there are many of which we are uncertain, whether he speaks of the resurrection of the body, or of the awaking from spiritual death to the new spiritual life of which he is the author. These words, however, are perfectly clear; for our Lord makes an evident distinction between the two; speaking first of the eternal life, which is enjoyed by those who see the Son and believe in him, and secondly, of the resurrection at the last day, to which he had before alluded, and which he promises to his disciples as something future.—

“ He distinguishes between those souls which believe on him in the highest and strictest sense of the words, and who have given themselves to him, and those whom the Father has given to him; and his first promise, accordingly, is a ground for general joy in relation to all our departed ones; while the second occasions a peculiar joy in respect to those who have cherished a living faith in him on earth, and here according to his saying have enjoyed eternal life.

“ As regards the first, it is our common faith that they who are received into the church, by the holy rite of baptism, are given, as it were, by the Father to the Son. In a peculiar manner, this may be said of our children, who are thus admitted from their infancy into the community of Christians. We consecrate them to the Lord, in this sacred ordinance, as his property, by Christian prayer and supplication, and from that moment regard them as his. Is it now asked, in what sense they are given to the Son, who are thus received only into the external communion of the faithful, I answer, they are given to him, in order that he may begin his work in them and carry it on unto perfection.—

“Of all who in the lapse of one year depart from this earthly life, a great proportion are the young, whose minds are not unfolded, and who, therefore, cannot possess a living faith in the Redeemer. Before their spiritual eye is so far opened, that they can behold in him the glory of the only begotten of the Father, their bodily eye is closed on the light and life of earth. But the Lord gives us the promise that the spiritual eye, which is destined to behold him, will not remain forever sealed; that the heart which is intended to beat in faith and love towards him will not continue forever cold; but that it is the will of the Father, that even by the great ordinance of nature which numbers the days of man, not one of the souls given him should be lost.

“When we welcome to this earthly life a new visitant, entrusted especially to our fidelity and our love, what means the rapture of our hearts? What produces this deep and strange emotion? What but the fact, that here is a soul, which we are to aid in unfolding the divine germ which yet slumbers within it; which we are to guard against the temptations of life; and which we are to bring as early as may be to the knowledge of him, through whom alone it can attain the eternal life to which it is destined. To this end, from the first, we direct our love; our joy and gratitude are called forth as we see this work advancing; we are filled with anxiety and sorrow, when it appears to go back. Now if a great proportion of these infant souls, in the very dawn of their being, when parents and friends can do little more than protect the bodily and earthly life, and cherish the first germ of love, in which the sensual is yet largely combined with the spiritual, and predominant over it,—in the hope that a more pleasing life will show itself in them, with the gradual unfolding of their spiritual nature;—if a great proportion of these, I say, are snatched from our care and love, before this

delightful hope can begin to be fulfilled—how rich the consolation, that the Lord has said, he should lose none whom the Father has given him ; not even the smallest, not even that which had not begun, which could not yet begin to walk in the path of his salvation.

“ But not in all whose lives are longer preserved are these cheering hopes fulfilled. We see many in the fulness of life and strength, concerning whom we do not know, whether we can apply to them the words of the Lord, ‘ that whoso believeth on him hath everlasting life ;’ nay, many go through the greatest part of their earthly career in such a manner, that though they cannot wholly escape the influence of the divine Spirit and Word upon their souls, nor that of the Christian life and morality, since they belong to the outward community of Christians,—yet, as they do not appropriate this to themselves, and exhibit no fruits from it, their confession of Christ, if they confess him at all, seems something altogether external ; because, to say nothing worse, we see so little of his spirit, so few traces of a lively intercourse with him. When such, therefore, to whom time has been granted, and to whom the fountain of salvation has not been closed, but who have not become partakers of eternal life, are summoned from this world, can we apply to them also the words of the Redeemer ? When we consider the subject more closely, we cannot fail to perceive a certain resemblance between them, and those who have been called from the earth, at the commencement of their lives ; and in this way, we cannot doubt of the applicability of the promise to those brothers of ours also.

“ We distinguish in man a variety of powers, both of mind and body, which each person, in a different degree, but yet which each possesses. Each of these powers has its own history, its own development ; we distinguish in each the first

awaking, as it were, the age of childhood,—then, the time of growth and blossoming,—and then, the time when it should bring forth fruit, in the whole sphere of human life. As these powers are unfolded only one after another, the difference which God, according to his unsearchable wisdom has established among men, depends on this circumstance, that in one the unfolding of these various powers takes place in rapid succession, in another, one remains behind the other, and in all, many never attain their complete development. But among all these gifts, the greatest is that, with which alone the salvation given us in the Redeemer is directly connected,—namely, the self-consciousness of the human soul, which once awakened can never be destroyed, that it is destined to something higher; but which by itself alone, and without the aid, which God has given us in the Redeemer, it cannot attain. When this at first awakes, it is manifested as a longing after something above the usual aims and the usual enjoyments of men. With this longing, the soul often wanders restlessly, before it finds repose in him, who has been near it so long, but whom it often knows not until late. Now do we see so many men unfolding all the powers of the spirit, exhibiting its blossoms and its fruit; but in whom this longing has not yet come to fruit or blossom,—what can we say, but that in this sense they are yet children? They are in the same unconsciousness with regard to this, which they once were in, with regard to their other powers; the earthly life has not yet been able to unfold in them this highest and noblest germ. Children, accordingly, have they yet remained in this higher self-consciousness which leads all men as repentant sinners to the feet of the Divine Son, and causes them when they see him to believe; children have they remained in this knowledge of themselves, in this endeavor after the end which God has prescribed to them; and as such children

have they left this earthly life. Neither, therefore, will the Lord lose them, for the Father has given them to him; and he will raise them up at the last day, then to resume and continue the work which was here advanced no further, according to the divine purpose in regard to every individual soul.—

“But, moreover, there is a peculiar joy in the second promise, expressed in the words, ‘This is the will of him who hath sent me, that whoso seeth the Son and believeth in him, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’ It has been already said that eternal life, as actually present here, is to be distinguished from the summons at the last day, considered as yet to come. But that the Redeemer has not only promised but actually given to us eternal life; that he not only directed the hopes of his disciples to a future state after death, but pointed out the present and actual enjoyment of eternal life,—this needs not to be proved to those who have known him, and believed in him, and seen in him the glory of the only begotten of the Father. We might even say that as the Redeemer bore an eternal life on earth, through the fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in him; so do all likewise bear an eternal life, who have become one with him, as he was one with the Father, and to whose hearts he has returned, in order with the Father, to make his abode with them. For they are no longer impelled by what is sensual and corruptible; it is an imperishable power, an unchangeable love from which every thing proceeds, which guides their whole life, fills their whole soul, and subjects every thing in it to its eternal order. As it is no injury to the eternal life of God, that his eternal decrees are fulfilled in a temporal form, and that the world which he has created moves in the sphere of time, so it is not inconsistent with our eternal life, that our thoughts and feelings which proceed

from the inner man are temporal and transient, and that for time we act on temporal things. Even when by divine grace, with our growth in holiness, our faith becomes stronger to endure and to overcome, and our love is manifested in a purer form,—this is not to be regarded properly as a new gift, or a change in the inner man, but it is the same inner man, exhibited with greater decision and vigor.—Are then our love and attention given alone to eternal things,—do these perpetually fill our minds, and predominate over all else; then is our life no longer a temporal, but an eternal one.

“Now if our beloved ones are called away in the enjoyment of this eternal life, what can disquiet us on their account; since we know that the Lord will raise them up at the last day. For otherwise can he not raise them up and present them to his Father, than as they are, and therefore, in possession of eternal life. Grace for grace have they received from his fulness; and what is theirs, can no man take from them. The freedom of God’s children have they attained through him who alone can truly make us free; and this must remain to them secure. Although it is written, ‘It doth not yet appear what we shall be,’ we still know that nothing essentially new can be given to them and to us. It is surely the same blessedness of faith and love, the same spiritual presence of the Redeemer in the soul, which is far higher and nobler than any bodily connexion with him can have ever been, the same living knowledge of the Son, and of the Father in the Son; for this knowledge and this love, since they are no fragment of human and corruptible origin, must remain immortal. Do we then know this,—and we have the firm persuasion that the connexion which we sustain with our departed ones, through the Redeemer, who is in them as in us, who for them as well as for us, is the fountain of the same eternal life, remains uninterruptedly the same,—what

should hinder us from cherishing the pure joy, which the Lord awakens in us through his word, concerning all the departed who while they remained on earth, gave light and strength to our souls? Or what tidings in regard to them do we desire? The essential portion of the treasures of heaven we share with them in the same faith and the same love; the most precious gem in the crown of the departed is not unknown and foreign to us; but we possess it likewise ourselves. Whatever may be the theatre, on which they continue their eternal life,—whether it will commence in our temporal manner,—whether it will involve eternal and temporal relations,—and whether we know much or little concerning these questions,—may be regarded by us with as great indifference as the same questions relating to ourselves in the present state.

“There can then properly be no pain and no tears over those of our brethren who are taken from us, according to the will of God. We follow after them, and the blessing of their memory remains with us. We follow after them; serene in faith and love,—with joyful gratitude that the Lord permitted them here to find eternal things. Their remembrance continues among us, as a benediction; for it ever calls us back to that which was their highest good in this life, and which will satisfy them also in the other.

“But sooner or later shall we too be joined to those whom we now remember in peace. If then the tranquillity and joy be so much greater, with which we think of those whose faith we have known, and from whose temporal life the eternal life has shone out upon us, let us also leave no doubt to the devoted love of those with whom and for whom we live, whether we have found and possess that eternal life; no anxiety, lest we have remained children, in whom the highest element of human existence was not yet unfolded; or dis-

eased children who could obtain no taste of the pure milk of the Gospel, nor apply it to the nourishment of spiritual life. May our whole life be adapted to give the pure and perfect joy to all connected with us, which every one must feel in the contemplation of that eternal life. By this alone, can we not only be raised above all earthly change, and assured of blessedness, while we yet wander on the earth; but this alone, when we go hence, can remove all earthly grief from those whom we leave behind." *

The reader is now able to determine how far the statement is to be relied on, that "it would be idle to inquire what hopes and what immortality Schleiermacher would hold out to a being whose personal existence is to cease with death." I trust that the inquiry will tend not only to correct erroneous impressions in regard to the opinions of Schleiermacher, but to quicken and elevate the mind in the indulgence of its immortal hopes.

We will now consider the views of Schleiermacher, concerning the Christian revelation. You represent him as denying "the divine authority of our religion," and in this respect, as having "as little belief as the Rationalist," "who rejecting revelation founds his faith in natural religion."

The Rationalist, it will be remembered, "using the word in its widest acceptance," denies the su-

* *Predigten*, vol. iv. pp. 353—364.

pernatural origin of Christianity ; explains away the miracles of the New Testament into merely natural events, or calls in question their historical credibility ; and admits no peculiar and essential Divinity in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These views, so far from being adopted by Schleiermacher, as you strangely enough suppose, found in him a vigorous and successful opponent. He believed in the supernatural origin of Christianity. He maintained that Christ wrought miracles, by the power of God. He contended for the intrinsic Divinity of the Redeemer, as manifested in his word and his works.

You assert that he differed from the Rationalists, in founding religion on the feelings, rather than on the understanding ; that “this was the point at issue between them ;” but that “the authority of revelation, as teaching the fundamental facts of religion, is equally rejected” by both.

This is altogether incorrect. He admitted, as we have seen, a rational and natural element in revelation ; so far, he agreed with the Rationalists ; but on the great dividing question, concerning the supernatural origin of Christianity, and the Divinity of the Redeemer, he was directly opposed to them ; and this will be evident from the passages, which I shall now produce. The first quotation expresses his general views in regard to the essential character of the Christian faith.

“It is well known, how much controversy there has always been, and still is, in the Christian world, on the meaning of the declaration that Jesus is the Son of God, and on the manner, in which the human and divine are united in him. Now, if it were a matter of universal importance for all Christians to obtain the most correct knowledge on this subject, it might be supposed that before the Lord pronounced the blessing on Peter, he would have asked, ‘In what way, do you call me the Son of God? How do you regard the union of the divine and human in my person?’ But this he did not do.—He avoided the question because he did not deem it important, although he could foresee what strife it would occasion the Church; and in order, that none of those, who, in an unchristian manner condemn others for such differences of opinion, should be able to appeal to him, as having proposed such intricate and subtile questions.—

“Accordingly, when Peter said that Jesus is the Christ, every one understood him as declaring that Jesus was not sent like John the Baptist, to announce the approach of the kingdom of God, but to establish it himself and in his own name; not like Elijah and others, to hold the forgotten law before the eye of its transgressor, but to institute the perfect in the place of the imperfect, and to judge the whole earth according to the revealed standard of God; not merely, like the former prophets, a comforter promising a better future in times of distress and repentance, but the one, in whom all prophecy is fulfilled; so that every future prediction can only repeat him, who is the source of all inspiration, and in whom all spiritual comfort is so given, that none can be needed which may not be drawn from his fulness.

“As regards the confession of Peter, that Jesus is the Son of the living God, we must bear in mind the words of the Redeemer, when his hearers called him in question, because

he had made God his Father, in a peculiar sense. He referred them to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which also common men were called children of God, sons of God ; and if those, to whom the word of God came, were called sons of God, how much more should he be called ‘ the Son of God.’ He thus distinguishes himself from those to whom the word of God was declared, as the one, who indeed did nothing from himself, from human counsel and will, but to whom the word of God needed not to come for special cases, since he knew all things, and understood what the Father did, and commanded ; as the one in whom the word of God was made flesh, so that, on the one hand, all his acts were divine life, and all his words divine truth, and on the other hand, he was our brother, in all human infirmity, yet without sin. This is the faith which Peter confessed ; for which he was blessed by the Redeemer ; which cannot be revealed by flesh and blood, but by our Father who is in heaven.” *

With regard to the views of Schleiermacher himself, concerning the union of the divine and human in the person of Jesus Christ, I present the following passages from his posthumous Discourses on the Gospel of John.†

* *Predigten*, vol. iv. pp. 92, 93.

† The remarks of the editor of this delightful volume may not be without interest in this connexion.

“Like the disciple whose Gospel he explains, he here leans on the bosom of Jesus ; what he has there seen and felt, he announces to us ; and declares in ever new relations the glory of the Word made flesh, of the Word eternally becoming flesh. How the whole being of Schleiermacher was rooted in the believing contemplation of this glory ; how this alone to his profound and penetrating spirit, solved and reconciled the deepest mysteries of our existence ; how

“When I read the Introduction to the Gospel of John, I cannot avoid the thought, that this Gospel should not stand after the others, but should be the first book in the New Testament, since its commencement has such a clear and decided reference to the commencement of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. For as it is said there, ‘In the begin-

it secured to him, for an indestructible possession, a tranquil simplicity, a perennial peace of mind, in the midst of the most varied activity; how it elevated him above every perplexity, and converted the world for him into a serene and glorious theatre of divine wisdom and love; and how it called forth that freedom from passion, that calm and gentle equanimity, as well as that noble, free, and vigorous use of life, which accords with such a lofty point of contemplation,—this will be evident to the apprehensive mind from the present work. The profound speculative ideas, on which the Christology of John is founded, are laid open with singular skill to the general mind; with rare freedom from pretension, the treasures of a rich, scientific knowledge of the Scriptures are applied in a manner universally intelligible; and all this in such lucid, sincere, and trustful language, that we feel, that nothing but the power of a master could attain to such complete and attractive simplicity.

“Schleiermacher, moreover, has been the means of saving many from bondage or from emptiness, who were unwilling to forego a thorough explanation, concerning their religious life. The revolution, which with powerful impulse, he at first gave to theology, has since unloosed many a centrifugal element; he himself, however, never lost the true, central point, but perceived it with increasing clearness; and thus, accordingly, he will be the man, who has found the word for the new epoch of theology which he commenced. This word around which all theological parties will more and more gather, which only acknowledge with him a peculiar place in human nature, and a peculiar life for the religious consciousness, and which desire to borrow faith neither from philosophy, nor from a letter esteemed sacred,—this word is Schleiermacher’s Christology, (doctrine concerning Christ.) *Predigten*, vol. viii. preface, pp. ix. x.

ning God created the heavens and the earth,' it is said here, 'In the beginning was the Word.' As it was the principal purpose of that book to describe the history of the patriarchs, and of the chosen people, and the sacred writer goes back to the commencement of the human race, and the creation of the whole world; so also John, whose purpose was to describe the history of the Word made flesh, of the mission of the Redeemer, by whom a new kingdom of God was to be founded, and man thus made a new creature, and the spiritual life more widely diffused; he too goes back to the commencement of all things; nay, we might say, still further back; and we cannot understand what he says, unless we bear in mind this reference to the commencement of the first book of Moses, and the object which he had in view, namely, to show that the Word which he declares was in the beginning with God, was made flesh.

"Now as it is said, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,' and afterwards, 'God said, Let there be light and there was light;' and as the whole work of creation is described by the expression, 'God spoke;' so John goes back to the word which God spoke, and says, 'In the beginning,' (in the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth) 'was the Word,' that is, the divine Word, by which all things were created." *

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' This has always been regarded as the most living and delightful expression of the genuine faith of Christians. We also who have not seen the Redeemer dwelling among men, may unite in these words of the Apostle with the strongest conviction. For all our

* *Predigten*, vol. viii. pp. 4, 5.

knowledge of the Redeemer, and the faith by which we behold in him the glory of the only begotten of the Father, rest upon the fact that he has dwelt among men in the world ; this is involved in all testimony concerning him, in all the effects which have proceeded from him ; and we cannot conceive that there should have been such a faith and community of Christians, that such an indescribable and salutary effect should have proceeded from a single point, and should ever act with increased influence on men, if ‘the Word had not been made flesh and dwelt among us.’

“By this expression, moreover, the Apostle at the same time indicates the great difference between the Redeemer, and all who are declared in the Scriptures to be messengers of God, and as such, have been received in the history of man. When the Apostle previously said, ‘In the Word was life, and that life was the light of men, and the light shined in darkness,’ he meant, that all the enlightening of men, who walked in darkness and in the shadow of death, had proceeded from the same fulness of the Divine Being which dwelt in Christ ; but in such a manner, that the light every where only shined in darkness. And this was true, not only of those who saw this light, but of those from whom it came. Even a prophet, the greatest as well as the least, was one in whom the light only shined in darkness ; it was only at particular moments that the Spirit of God came on the soul, and enlightened it with light from above ; but, in general, even these men of God shared in the darkness which could not comprehend the light.

“But with the Redeemer the case was different. The Word was made flesh. The same divine and everlasting Word, which from the beginning was the light of men, this fulness of the Godhead became flesh, that is, became man in a man. This was the only condition, on which we could

behold in him the glory of the only-begotten of the Father ; and only in the Son could we see the Father, because elsewhere darkness universally prevailed.

“ We are also to notice how decidedly the Apostle here ascribes the union of the divine fulness with human nature to the commencement of the human life of Christ, when he says, ‘ The Word was made flesh.’ The man Jesus did not first exist, and then, at a subsequent period, the Word of the Lord come upon him, although in a far higher degree than on other prophets ; but the Word was made flesh ; the man Jesus only thereby became the Redeemer of the world ; from the very beginning, the union of the fulness of the Godhead with human nature existed in him.—

“ As in the expression, ‘ the Word was made flesh,’ the Apostle assures us of the true and perfect humanity of the Redeemer, so in the expression, ‘ that we beheld his glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,’ he assures us of his absolute peculiarity, to which nothing else is like ; and that in a totally different manner, and in the divine sense of the word, he is a Son of the Father, to whom no other is equal ; but in a way which has no parallel, the only-begotten of the Father, by whom all others obtain the power to become the children of God.

“ There is a difference between the expressions ‘ children of God,’ and ‘ Son of God,’ which is always observed in Scripture, but which we often overlook. That is, all of us, so far as we have obtained the power from Christ, are called children of God ; but he is the Son of God. According to the general use of language, the term ‘ child ’ refers to a state of imperfection and inequality with the Father ; but the word ‘ Son ’ designates a state of maturity and independence which implies a certain equality between Father and Son ; and ‘ the Son,’ as the Scripture says, ‘ abides in the house

of the Father forever.' This is the permanent relation between the Redeemer, and those who through him have obtained the power to become children of God. He is the Son, to whom, as he says himself, 'all power is given in heaven and in earth;' who, as the Scripture says, 'abides in the house of the Father forever;' and as the Scripture says, 'the servant abideth not in the house of his Master;' so it is the Son, who forever administers its affairs; and so therefore is he equal with the Father, endowed with his power, clothed with his glory, entrusted with a knowledge of his counsels and his will, the brightness of his perfections. We all obtain from him the power to become children of God; we remain, in ourselves considered, in the infancy and imperfection of spiritual life; we shall never become equal to him who dwells forever as the only-begotten Son in the house of the Father."*

" 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.' So says the Son himself. 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is of God, he hath seen the Father.' Clearly and decidedly the Redeemer here speaks of himself, as of a peculiar person, who has not his equal. For though the law given by Moses is a divine law; though the Spirit of God came upon the prophets; though before Moses, Abraham received divine promises of a sublime character, from which all the dealings of God with the Jewish people proceeded; yet none of these ever saw God. Only from him who had seen God, who came down from the bosom of the Father, can the kingdom of grace and truth among men proceed; all else, in comparison, must vanish away; it has no essential being; but only the shadow and type of good things to come. All grace and all knowledge

* *Predigten*, vol. viii. pp. 31—36.

of God has begun with Christ, with him who was in the bosom of the Father, and from him has descended into this human world. Only in him and through him can man know God the Father and receive from his fulness grace and truth. The law was given by Moses as a divine law; the prophets brought the divine word to the people; but the true revelation of God, the living, inward consciousness of him, the experience that we have power to become children of God,—this we can obtain only through the Son, who has come down to us from the bosom of the Father,—and this also is our assurance, that no one has ever seen God; that hence no such union between man and God as he founded, had ever taken place; that no one like him had opened the spiritual eye of man to light from above; that the human heart which had grown cold and dead, had never been prepared for the heavenly influence of truth, as by him, who has declared to us all that the Father revealed to him, and has shown us all his works.”*

Such are the views of Schleiermacher concerning the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. They may differ, in many respects, from those which have been usually presented in English theology; they may not coincide with the general opinions of liberal Christians in our own country; but, few, I think, would employ language so loosely, as to designate them by the word “infidelity;” on the contrary, if they are objected to at all, it will be, I presume, on account of their exhibiting higher

* *Predigten*, vol. viii. pp. 41, 42.

conceptions in regard to the connexion between Jesus Christ and God, than many are prepared to admit.

I will now bring forward some passages which represent the value and importance of miracles, in the theology of Schleiermacher. It will be seen from them that he embraced the historical truth of the miracles of Jesus, as recorded in the New Testament ; that he considered them to be peculiar manifestations of divine power, above the ordinary course of nature ; that, to a certain degree, in his opinion, they are proofs of the divine mission of the Redeemer ; but that so far from being the *only* proofs, they are not the primary, nor the principal proofs ; and that the faith of the Christian in the Divinity of Jesus rests on a far deeper and more permanent support.

“ No small portion of the biography of our Lord consists in the narration of individual acts of mercy, by which he manifested his glory in sufferers of various descriptions ; and which the narrator represents not as works of ordinary human skill ; still less as the effect of chance ; but as the out-flowing of his higher, divine power. If many at the present day can do nothing with these narratives, but renounce, as far as possible, all that is miraculous and supernatural in them, and reduce that which is represented as one act of a higher power, to a number of small, separate events, to a happy coincidence of many circumstances,—I will not say precisely that this indicates a disposition foreign to the faith of Christ-

ians, and without any perception of its essential character ; but yet such a procedure does show a state of mind, that has not considered how much the heart would suffer, if the understanding only can always perceive its office to solve difficult problems, so far as the means for this are not wanting. But it was not for this purpose, that the first disciples of Jesus, or their successors, recorded these narratives ; but, as one of them expressly says, that we might believe ‘ that Jesus is the Christ.’ Neither from the consequence alone, nor from the miraculous manner alone in which it was introduced, but from the whole of such narratives, must the spirit of a divine messenger appeal to every one, by whom they may be heard or read. We certainly are not referred with our faith, to these narratives, in the same way, as those, for whom they were first verbally communicated, and afterwards, preserved in many forms, in writing. For too often and too richly, for us to be obliged to strengthen our faith by individual, miraculous acts, has the great miracle been renewed among us, to which Christ himself expressly refers the faithful, namely, that divine light has taken the place of darkness, that the children of this world are transformed by the word and the power of Jesus into children of God, who know from experience that his doctrine is from God ; too richly has the greatest of his prophecies been fulfilled through the lapse of centuries, that his Church should not be overcome by the powers of hell. Neither can these narratives produce the same lively impression on us, as on those who knew the Redeemer personally ; or who at least had received from the accounts of his friends, a distinct image of his personal relations, and which was completed or revived by each of these histories. Still we also may have a similar enjoyment, when we contemplate them devoutly. For these demonstrations of the benevolence and mercy of our Lord are connected with his great

mission as the Redeemer of men; the power as well as the spirit of him who claimed to be the first-born among the sons of God, is displayed in them, in various modes; and thus his image is revived in our hearts, and our love and veneration towards him are elevated and strengthened.” *

The intrinsic probability that the manifestation of God in the person of Christ would be attended by miracles is set forth in the following passage.

“If we would seek a miracle, in all its fulness, in the kingdom of nature, we must go back to the time of the creation. Strictly speaking, this is the time of miracles. The essential character of the miraculous is contained in the fact that what we see was called forth from nothing by the Lord. That the original powers of nature, in forms entirely strange to us, should have raged and fermented in apparent confusion, until the durable production came forth, whose regular order and harmonious motions display the divine omnipotence and wisdom,—this is the miracle, in which all others are lost. If an event seemingly miraculous now appears, we regard it either as always belonging to the nature of things, and having remained hidden to us, or as a new development, a later portion, as it were, of the creation. The season of preservation, on the other hand, is the time, in which miracles cease, and the regular order of nature goes on. A miracle creates; but that which is preserved, that which subsists, is nature, is the kingdom of laws, which we suppose universal, and which alone assures us of the established connexion of things, and which, if the eye of our spirit reached to a sufficiently wide and deep extent, we should every where understand.

* *Predigten*, vol. i. pp. 414, 415.

“ Now in that event, which is the most affecting of any in the whole kingdom of nature,—the beginning of a new life,—how clearly do we see the operation of a productive power, what a striking resemblance does it present to a new creation ! Let us apply this to our present subject. What is the great work, for which first, the Prince of Life appeared, and then, the Spirit of God was poured out on all flesh ? It is nothing less than a new creation. There was to be, what had not yet been. Eternal life was to take the place of transitory and sensual life ; a communion with God was to be established, which the prevailing terrors of man before an unknown power could not produce. The certainty of salvation by a sure prophetic word could not arise from manifold wanderings in a wrong path ; or from fruitless searchings into the depths of the human spirit. This time, therefore, was justly the time of miracles. Then moved the creative power of the Spirit. The Lord, therefore, as he, through whom and to whom every thing in the spiritual world is made, was endowed with those miraculous powers, which attested his higher, creative might ; therefore, in his first manifestations, the Spirit operated as the power producing a higher nature and a higher life.” *

The next passage which I shall quote, relates to the divine power, by which the miracles of Jesus were performed.

“ When we consider every thing which the disciples have related concerning the miracles of our Lord, it is natural to ask, Whence did he obtain this power ? Not as unbelievers do we put this question ; but in order as far as possible to

* *Predigten*, vol. ii. pp. 535, 536.

give ourselves a clear and correct account of our faith. Our answer to this question will be in evident accordance with the faith of the primitive disciples; on which faith their preaching was founded; and from which preaching, the faith of all Christians afterwards proceeded and still proceeds; our answer, I say, will agree with that original faith which arose from an immediate view of the facts, only when we reply in the words of Peter, ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.’

“We can give no other explanation than this, when we compare the history of these works of our Lord, with similar effects,—whether of ordinary human science and skill, or of wonderful and inexplicable exhibitions of human power. In the first place, the acts of our Lord, by which diseases were cured, did not proceed from the human science and skill of the physician; for he performed them,—without investigating the nature and origin of the malady, and using means accordingly,—merely through the power of his word and his will; and therefore, we can seek the ground of these effects only in an immediate, operative power, independent of all artificial skill. Still we ought not to assert, that the miracles of healing have no analogy with any thing purely human. The greater the power of the spirit in any individual, the greater is the force which he employs,—immediately on the minds of others, for that is the peculiar sphere of spiritual power,—but besides this through the mind on the physical nature; so that sometimes by the mere presence of such a man others are sensibly affected. We ought not then to deny that we may have experience of remarkable effects, which, as it seems, the will of one man produces on another;—and though some hidden change in the soul be the first cause, yet what we see, is the change which takes place in physical nature.

“I certainly do not allude to these phenomena as if they

were a measure for the miraculous effects, which were produced by our Lord during his ministry on earth, so that we would reduce him to an equality with such men; but they may serve for a point of transition from our every-day experience to what was peculiar in Christ; and help us to comprehend how physical effects could proceed from the anointing of his soul with the Holy Ghost; and thus to perceive the connexion between the spiritual miracle of his person, and the physical miracles of his deeds. Whatever may be inexplicable in human operations of this kind, they still remain something that is natural; for the most remarkable effects of the spirit and of the power of will always lie within the compass of human nature. If we must here admit such a difference that one person can often do what a thousand others cannot do, how much more when we look at human nature in the person of our Redeemer. As, on the one hand, he partook of this nature, and as a man was like unto us all, on the other hand, he was so far exalted, that no one can be compared with him, since from the commencement of his earthly life, as the Apostle declares, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, or as the Scripture elsewhere expresses it,—for all are different words for the same thing,—the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him from the beginning, so must the effects which he produced by the mere exercise of his will, with these divine endowments, far surpass the limits which bound the power of human nature in every other mortal. This was the opinion of the Apostle when he uttered the words which I have quoted; this has always been the faith of Christians; of those at least among us of a later day, to whom it is given with simple sense and unperverted eye, to receive these narratives of our evangelical books. And why should we not delight in these manifestations of his higher nature, and recognise in them the favor of God which

has visited us in Christ, with the same joy, as we reverence, in the doctrine of the Lord and in the words of wisdom which proceeded from his mouth, the pure, but natural and necessary manifestation of his anointing with the Divine Spirit and with the power of God? It is only a petty and trivial understanding which voluntarily binds itself by the rules of the most ordinary experience, and loves to explain the greatest effects from the smallest causes,—it is only this which has often lamentably perverted the faith of Christians,—lamentably, I say,—because thus the pure image of the Redeemer is inevitably clouded, and though they are not willing to confess it, exposed to manifold corruptions.”*

Having thus shown the views of Schleiermacher in regard to the historical truth and the divine character of the miracles of Jesus, I proceed to exhibit his opinions concerning their connexion with the Christian faith.

“What is the miracle on which we all take our stand? The miracle which is inseparable from our faith, as its deepest and most interior ground, and without which every thing natural within the sphere of the spirit, however admirable it may be, would lose its true value in our sight? It is the miracle of Christ himself. It is the miracle, that the Word was made flesh,—the miracle, that the glory of the only begotten Son was displayed in a human form, while all others, without exception had sinned and come short of the glory of God. It is the miracle, that Christ not only possessed the glory of the only begotten Son, but from the beginning has given, and still gives to all who believe on him

* *Predigten*, vol. iv. pp. 558—561.

the power to become the children of God. To this miracle, we cannot cleave too fast ; into this, we cannot go too deep. Every new glimpse which we obtain of it, must increase our wisdom and power ; the more we look into it, the greater will be our power to become children of God ; for just in that proportion, do we gain in the faith which is the fountain of blessedness.

“ But what shall we say concerning those miraculous deeds of Christ, of which so many are described at length in the history of his life, and still more, mentioned in general, without a detailed account ? These miracles are connected in Christ with that great miracle ; but, manifested in history among the phenomena of human life, they were early separated from that, and have never been completely united. Ten lepers were healed by the Redeemer ; only one returned to give glory to God ; the others,—they remained cleansed ; they were free from their bodily disease, but they obtained no share in the spiritual miracle. Many paralytics were cured ; many blind made to see ; many deaf again heard ; but only those who listened to another word than that, ‘ Thy faith hath saved thee,’ only those, who because they desired it from the heart, heard also another word, ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee,’ obtained a part in the great spiritual miracle of God.” *

“ Do we ask, What was the glory which was manifested to those who were told of this miraculous deed [the conversion of water into wine] of the Redeemer ? We must admit that in a miracle, there is no difference between great and small ; when the known limits of nature are once exceeded, we have no standard of comparison ; there is no miracle that can be called greater or smaller ; but all is one and the same which passes the bounds of the natural order. It was deemed ne-

* *Predigten*, vol. iii. p. 419.

cessary that he who wished to produce any uncommon effect, should be able to pass the bounds of the natural order ; this we know from the records of the Old Testament, concerning most of those, whom the Lord used as his special instruments ; nay, it was a general rule, that he who presented himself as a prophet should authenticate his claims to being such an instrument, by a transgression of the laws of nature. The act of our Lord, therefore, could manifest to the disciples the glory of a prophet, but not the Divinity of his nature. For since we cannot comprehend the miraculous, neither can we comprehend what is necessary to the production of a miracle. Now as we are acquainted with miracles from the times of the ancient prophets, concerning whom we yet know that they did not possess the Divinity which dwelt in the Redeemer ; we cannot believe, that John intended to assert in these words, that it was from this and other miraculous deeds of the Redeemer, that he had obtained the knowledge of the Divinity in his nature. No, the glory of the Lord shone forth upon the disciples, not from his individual miracles, but from his whole and entire being, from the immediate impression which that made upon them, and which was produced, in the most glorious manner, by the words of life which he spoke. And this glory they had found, when they joyfully said to each other, ‘ We have found the Messiah.’ For that this was the Son of God, destined to redeem the human race,—this was the faith of all who with true zeal and inward sincerity clung to this hope. In what the Lord here did, it could not, therefore, be revealed to them that he was the Son of God. And when John adds, ‘ And his disciples believed on him,’ this was not their first exercise of faith ; but in the full power of faith, that he was the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world, as John the Baptist had designated him, that he was

the one, who should come after him,—only from this faith had they become his disciples ; and only when they acknowledged him, as the one, through whom all the hopes of man were to be fulfilled, could they say to each other, ‘ We have found the Messiah.’ The miracle, therefore, was not the ground of their faith, neither this, nor any other, which the Lord afterwards wrought.” *

“ ‘ But I have greater witness than that of John ; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.’ What are we to understand by the works, which the Lord here refers to as the divine testimony to himself? Every one certainly is reminded of the miraculous acts of the Redeemer, which he often calls his works in a special sense ; but, upon closer examination, we shall see that we are not to give our exclusive attention to them. For we may ask, What could these works testify of Christ? Certainly, that God had sent him, as Nicodemus also says, ‘ We know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.’ The nation from remote antiquity, and through its earlier history, was accustomed to regard miracles as the signs of a divine mission, and to consider one who performed miracles and who taught at the same time, as a teacher sent from God. But by this, the mission of the Redeemer was not distinguished from the mission of other prophets of the Lord ; and hence those works could give no other testimony for him, than that he was sent by the Father, as others had been sent before him ; accordingly, they did not give the testimony that he was sent by the Father as the Son of the Living God, but by the Lord and King of the people, as one of his servants and bondmen, like

* *Predigten*, vol. viii. pp. 123—125.

each of those extraordinary men under the old covenant. Other testimony than this could the Lord not receive from his works; but this would have satisfied him as little as the human testimony of John.

“ But if we further ask, Were then the miracles of the Lord the works of which he could say, ‘ the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me ? ’ But how ? If the miracles taken together, had been the works which his Father had given him to finish, we must then believe, that the purpose of his mission would have been accomplished with the performance of these works. But this be far from us. For let us remember the words which we read in another passage of Scripture, ‘ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ’ They, whom the Lord delivered from earthly suffering, even they, whom he awoke from the dead, or saved from death,—what did they gain except an earthly advantage for a short time, until the end of human life again arrived ? Nay, even those, to whom he gave the power that even spirits were subject unto them,—did those gain, except in a subordinate sense, what is heavenly and spiritual ? But injury in the soul, therefore, could they all suffer,—both those, who were helped by the miracles of the Lord, and those in whom his miraculous power was continued.

“ But the work, which the Father had given him to finish, was to seek and to save them who were lost; that is, to cure every injury to the soul, and to guard it, for the future; and this then was what he meant by the works, which the Father had given him to finish. For what was the purpose of all his actions and all his teachings but to seek and to save them who were lost ? For what did he work all his life through, but that the soul of man might be helped, that it might be secured against all harm, and its salvation firmly established ?—

“What does the Redeemer refer to as the true ground of all living faith in him? To nothing else than the inward experience of the heart. It is precisely the same, which he expresses in another place, ‘If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be from God, or whether I speak of myself.’ To such a man, the witness of the Redeemer is a heavenly witness, because he feels and is conscious, that it is a truly divine doctrine, which in its power brings salvation to the lost, peace to the perturbed spirit, repose to those involved in ceaseless conflict; it is a divine doctrine which the Redeemer utters, because he experiences this doctrine only as a divine work from him; because he knows, that the doctrine which testifies of him, that is, the doctrine which sounds forth from the words, ‘Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,’—that this doctrine, when we act upon it, appears a divine doctrine, and that we perceive its divinity in the testimony which the Father gives of the Son, and by which he draws the heart of man to him, and that the works which the Redeemer performs are works wrought in God, and effects of the power and fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him.” *

“Many Christians remain in the error of ascribing too great importance to what is merely external in the life and manifestation of Christ; whereas its importance properly consists in the fact, that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him; that he came down from heaven, in the sense which he early expressed, that he had no will but that of his Father; and as he afterwards said, that he had come to show the Father, and to make it possible for men to be taught of God. But so long as we seek the ground of faith in him, in any thing external, in the mode in which his earthly being began, in the miracles which accompanied his activity among men, or in other out-

* *Predigten*, vol. viii. pp. 370—374.

ward things, by which he was distinguished from other men,—we are not in the true way of believing, and are yet subject to many doubts, which we ought long since to have got over. For a true and living faith will say to itself, ‘These things indeed are so, as related in the Holy Scriptures; but it might have been otherwise; and this fact can establish no essential difference between Christ and other men. The redemption which he brings depends alone on the fact, that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him; that he came down from above to reveal to us the divine will and to receive us into communion with his heavenly Father; that with the fulness of the Godhead in him was manifested the true and living image of the Eternal Being; and that he has shown us by what he was, and what was in him, the brightness of the divine glory. To look alone on this inward character, to cling to this union of the divine and human in him, to regard him as the true and exhaustless source of all the divine communications through grace to men,—this is the genuine, living faith.’ *

“What was the connexion between the miraculous powers of our Lord, and his peculiar mission to announce the kingdom of God and to draw men to faith? Not, we may all thank God, such a connexion, as if the miracles of the Lord were the proper ground of our faith, that to him a name is given above every name, a name in which all may find salvation. The Apostle connects the preaching of peace by our Lord with the testimony of John. But John did not preach peace, as any thing which he could give himself; he merely summoned men to repentance; still he proclaimed the kingdom of God, and peace, accordingly, through him who should come after him. Not the less, however, did he demand faith in his message; and our Lord himself always represents him as sent of God, and jointly demanding faith. But the Evan-

* *Predigten*, vol. viii. pp. 438, 439.

gelist John expressly tells us, that John the Baptist wrought no miracles. The performance of signs and wonders was not given to him ; but yet they who did not believe on him, were held as accountable as they who withheld their faith from the Lord. Therefore faith in the Redeemer must proceed from something else than his miracles. It must not take root in the outward acts of Christ, not in the desire of men for external help which exceeds ordinary powers ; for such needs, we must look rather to the usual powers of nature ; but faith must proceed from the needs of men who seek peace, because they neither have it in themselves, nor can give it to themselves ; who seek the kingdom of God, while they find in themselves nought but unconquered and too often victorious earthly desires ; and hence can establish no other kingdom than that of an external peace, in the midst of constant inward strife. Where such a desire exists, there also, it is soon said, ‘ Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.’

“ Let us consider, moreover, how unstable would be the ground of our faith, if it rested only on the miracles of Christ. This is equally true in regard to us, and to the contemporaries of our Lord. It was surely not the effect of chance, but of the disposing wisdom of God, that, at the time of the Redeemer, there were others who went about doing good, and healing those who were said to be possessed of devils, and for whom there was no certain remedy in the usual skill and science of the physician. By what means, and in what manner, these effects were produced, we do not know ; perhaps, we might have known, if those who lived at the time and from whom we receive the histories, had known themselves ; but they were ignorant, and no more able than ourselves, as we perceive from many indications, to draw a distinct line between the miracles of our Lord, and the works which resembled them. Nay, the Redeemer plainly admits a certain

similarity and agreement between his signs and wonders, and the extraordinary cures which others performed. Only on this supposition, could he have put the question to those who said, 'that he cast out devils through the prince of devils,' 'By whom then do your children cast them out?' How much less then, can such distinctions be established by us, who are so far removed from those times, that even the more detailed accounts of those extraordinary manifestations of his power only seldom enable us to form a clear and distinct conception of the actual occurrence? And if we cannot distinguish between the miracles of our Lord and those of his unbelieving contemporaries, what would be the ground of our faith, if we were directed only to those miracles? We, who are surrounded on all sides by the mysteries of nature; whose eye is enabled only by long practice to see much which once escaped the notice of men; who have learned after a course of centuries, by a vast treasure of human experiences, to reverence the divine wisdom, because for it, all is ever one and the same, which we are so often inclined to divide; who find much that is incomprehensible and mysterious, but yet true and certain, since it is confirmed by experience; who know the difficulty of defining the limits of the natural and the supernatural, since often, we might say, generally, what is higher and supernatural, though obvious, on one side, and what is mysterious, on the other, run into each other in an uncomprehensible manner;—could we, I say, be justified in our own sight, if we believed in the Lord, on no other ground, than that he wrought miracles while he lived on earth? No. And our Lord himself—though he often appeals to his works, and among those works his miraculous acts are certainly to be included,—yet, appeals above any thing else when he most urgently insists on faith, to the testimony of the Father. But what is this testimony? It is that

which he expressly promises, when he says, ‘Whoso shall do his will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be from God, or whether I speak of myself.’ It is the testimony which his Father gave him, that the doctrine which he preached was not his own, but his who sent him; that if man,—though he can do nothing without divine aid,—with this attempts and desires to do his will, he will gain the conviction in the depths of his soul, that the doctrine is of God. This must be the ground of faith in the Redeemer,—that his word is able to awaken the desire of that divine peace, of that supremacy of the Divine Spirit, of which the sinful heart is destitute; and to satisfy it, when awakened. But this power belongs to his word in and for itself, only in connexion with the complete image of Christ which we form in our souls; this gives us a secret foreboding, which is soon changed into an ever-growing certainty, that Jesus, though actually bearing human nature, though found in fashion as a man, was not, like all of us, subject to sin, but had the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him.

“But although the miracles of the Lord cannot be the ground of our faith, ought we on that account to say that there is no connexion between his miraculous endowments and his spiritual mission? The Apostle certainly indicates a connexion when he speaks at the same time, of his being ‘anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power.’ But what connexion? The purpose of this declaration was to impress the conscience with a sense of the guilt, incurred by those who slew the Prince of Life. But this was called forth, not primarily in view of the superhuman powers of the Lord, but of the holy will that made use of them; and only so far in view of those supernatural powers, as their exercise by the Lord was always benevolence and love. And such was, and still is their connexion. He, who beholds in the Lord, the

only begotten son of God, the image of the Supreme, full of grace and truth, independently of his miraculous deeds,—he will also perceive that his supernatural powers proceeded from the same source, as his redeeming power, from the anointing with the Holy Ghost and with power from above; he will also perceive the distinction, as well as the connexion, between the self-sacrificing love of the Lord for the salvation of the world, and the treasure of external benefits which accompanied and glorified the earthly life of the Redeemer. The redeeming love and the beneficent love, which were proffered to all, who wished for help, were one and the same. But he whose heart was so obdurate towards the faith which God set forth to all men, as to suppose that Jesus of Nazareth, with this doctrine, with this wisdom, with this love, was nothing but a deceiver of the people,—he only could be so blinded as to believe that Christ performed the miracles which he wrought by means of the prince of evil spirits. Our faith, therefore, in the Redeemer himself, and in his divine mission and dignity, should not depend on our faith in his miracles; but our faith in his miracles must be the natural fruit of our faith in his divine power, and in his mission of redemption.”*

“It is one thing to consider the individual narratives of Christ. The mode of the Redeemer’s intercourse with men, is then prominent above every thing else. It is another thing to consider the miracles in general, as they appear to contradict or to exceed all the laws and order of nature. But we have to regard this as an important element in the life of the Redeemer. This, moreover, has always been, and still is, an object of controversy among Christians. The value, which should be attached to them, is differently estimated by different minds. The light, which they reflect on the Redeemer,

* *Predigten*, vol. iv. pp. 565—570.

appears more favorably to one than to another. It is, therefore, important as far as possible,—and each can contribute to this purpose only according to his proportion of faith and insight,—to obtain a view of the miracles of the Redeemer, adapted to produce a general and joyful harmony. In regard to the various views which prevail among Christians, I will first exhibit what, according to my best and conscientious convictions, the miracles are not and cannot be for us; and then what they are, and should continue to be.

“First, the miracles of the Redeemer cannot be the ground and the source of our saving faith in him. For how can we obtain a certain conviction, a clear insight, in regard to the connexion between objects so totally diverse? The miracles of the Redeemer, when we view them as his actions, and consider them in their effects, as every one must confess, present the evidence of powers, dwelling in him which surpass the measure of all human powers. But what kind of powers are they? To revive the decayed senses, to make the crippled limbs again active, to expel diseases from the human body, to satisfy the wants of man relating to physical life, in an extraordinary and unprecedented manner,—these are all effects in the kingdom of nature. Can we infer from them what the same man has power and commission to accomplish in the kingdom of grace?—

“Do we ask, Whence a true and living faith in the Redeemer must proceed? Can it arise in man, before he becomes conscious of the wretched state in which his spiritual nature is found without communion with the Redeemer? Can he obtain a living faith in him, unless at the same time, he feels the power of sin, its effects to separate man from God, and combines them both together? Contemplate a soul in this state; suppose that all the miracles of the Redeemer were set forth before it; would these be able to give

it satisfaction and repose? Would it not rather say, 'Gladly would I bear all these bodily evils, if I could be freed from every thing which oppresses me within, which beats down the spiritual man, and threatens to deprive it of life.' He then must be impelled to seek a Redeemer by another need; in him must prevail another desire than that from which we proceed, namely, to be rescued from the power of sin, and to be brought near to God; this, I say, must be the case with him, who can ground his faith in the Redeemer, and hope to find peace with him, on the fact that he performed such miracles and signs.—

“ But, though we cannot regard the miracles of the Redeemer as the peculiar foundation of our faith in him, I observe, in the second place, they ought never to be a stumbling-block and hinderance to faith. But this, alas! not seldom is the case. From the very beginning, have the adversaries of the Gospel, who fought against this new way of salvation, and especially those who were most conversant with the wisdom of this world,—from the very beginning, have they attacked the signs and miracles of our Lord. They have objected to them on account of the manner in which they are related, the composition of the narratives which have come down to us, the contradiction they present to experience and to the general, known laws of nature; and hence they conclude that a history, whose substance, though tenable in itself, is surrounded with such narratives, cannot command our faith. And even at the present day,—and we cannot ascribe it to hostility against the dealings of God with the human race through Christ,—there are many well-disposed persons anxious for the salvation of their souls to whom the miracles of the Lord are a stumbling-block. They say, 'If only these histories were not there,' which always give them a new puzzle, concerning which they can scarcely avoid the

thought that they owe their origin to the credulity of the multitude; if only these histories were not there, and the form of the Redeemer, separated from all this, stood before them, in the purity of his love, in the power of his word, in the sublimity of his thoughts, in the certainty with which he spoke of his relation to the Father, and told to man what he had learned from God; 'if this alone had been presented to us, divested of all that is miraculous, how easy then,' say they, 'would have been our faith. But now we are always repelled anew by these things; we must suspect the whole narrative, because it is combined with so much that contradicts universal experience and its laws.'

"This, certainly, is a great unhappiness for a time like our own,—that so many should be attracted on the one side by the needs of their inward experience, and repelled on the other, by their judgment on a subject which falls entirely within the province of the understanding. But if this need be only genuine and deeply felt,—may not a soul to which the wished for salvation is presented overcome these merely apparent difficulties? 'Have you not,' I would say to such souls, 'have you not another history which you can set against this? Have you not the historical testimony of the effects which a living communion with the Redeemer has produced on those who lived with him and gave themselves to him? Have you not the wonderful history of the founding of a community through him, by means of such men,—almost without exception uncultivated in the ordinary sense of the word, familiar with no art or science,—as were the disciples of our Lord? Are you not compelled to believe this history, because it is connected with your present experience, because it stands before your eyes, because the whole condition of the world has been decided by its influence? Well, then, if you must believe this, see that you cleave to it. If even

now, so far as you open your spiritual eye in love, you can obtain the testimony of those who were rescued from the deepest distress of mind, as soon as they entered into a living relation with the Redeemer of the world; if you can daily repeat this experience; then unlock your hearts, I pray, forget all the blind whose eyes he has opened, the lame whom he has made to walk, the deaf whose ears he has unsealed, the dumb, the bands of whose tongue he has loosed, forget all the sick whom he has healed; and keep only to these separate histories of his unchangeable influence on the inner nature of man, keep only to this one history, that the office of preaching reconciliation proceeded from him,—and then will you also be able to believe in the words of the Apostle, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.’

“ Having now disposed of this point, let us resume our own position, as those who have found salvation in the Redeemer, independently of his signs and miracles, through the spiritual power which he exerts on the inner nature of man, and to which we have opened our souls. Let us inquire, since the miracles,—though we need them not for the foundation of our faith,—stand in connexion with his saving words, with his great and ever-progressive work of establishing a community of the faithful,—what they can be to us?

“ I answer, they are a sign of the pleasure of God in the Redeemer. They are the sensible expression of the voice from heaven, ‘ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ Conceive of all the signs and miracles of the Redeemer, and if possible, of still greater, and more numerous; but suppose that the love by which he was the image of the Divine Being was banished from the soul of him who wrought them; suppose that they had been performed by one, whose soul was filled with earthly ambition, elated with his power,

and triumphing over man,—what could his signs and miracles be to us? I answer, nothing; nothing, but a mournful proof how the most glorious gifts of God can be thrown away, when they are bestowed upon a mind which is not filled with his essence, because the spirit of love does not dwell therein. But that dwelt in the Redeemer, by which he commends himself to men; the love which said to them, ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;’ this must take possession of their hearts, and bow them in devotion before his feet. But this required, that he should take the form of a servant, that he should not desire to act a conspicuous part among men; in this form, the spirit of love could have free course and signal manifestation. Therefore, God placed these powers in the earthly appearance of the Redeemer, so that by the benefits which he conferred upon men, the works of compassion which he wrought in the form of a servant, the manner in which he condescended to the wretched and oppressed, he might display the spirit which dwelt in him. When we contemplate the subject in this point of view, how can we avoid regarding him in his miracles as the one in whom God was well-pleased? The Redeemer, whose mission on earth was of a purely spiritual nature, could not have any other earthly calling; should we not expect then, as he must have sustained some connexion with the actual life of men, that he would show himself in the calls of common life as one whom the Father had sent? It was almost unavoidable, therefore, that such powers should have been imparted to him, and that by means of such signs and miracles, as God wrought through him, he should show himself to be a man sent from God. And hence the believing mind turns so gladly to the contemplation of these acts of the Redeemer, of which we have an account. As they are related, in one of their aspects, to indicate the spiritual need

which always finds its counterpart in some bodily evil, we always discover in them the same love with which the Redeemer came to the spiritual aid of man. Wherever this is displayed, we are invited to a feast of spiritual joy, which nothing can disturb; we oppose our ignorance to every doubt which the understanding may suggest; doubt is thus banished; and only that remains, to which the desire of our faith is directed, namely, that herein also, we know and honor the Redeemer, the same in every relation of his life, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." *

I have now brought forward sufficient evidence, I trust, to show the incorrectness of your classification of Schleiermacher with the unbelievers in a "miraculous revelation of God through Christ." Whether his views relating to Christianity are in accordance with the popular theology of any of our prevailing sects, or whether they may serve to give higher and more satisfactory conceptions of the whole subject, I gladly leave to the decision of those who are impelled to theological inquiry by the consciousness of their religious nature.

There is nothing further in your pamphlet concerning Schleiermacher that need detain us long, with the exception of the quotation (p. 44.) and your remarks on it, in relation to the true idea of a miracle.

* *Predigten*, vol. iii. pp. 448—457.

The quotation as given by you is as follows.

“ ‘What is a miracle’ ? ‘A miracle is but the religious name for an event. Every one, the most natural and the most common, if it be of such a character, that it may be prevailingly viewed under a religious aspect, is a miracle. To me, all is miracle; and in your sense, as meaning something inexplicable and strange, only that is a miracle which is none in mine.’ ” *

“ In his note on this passage, † added in the third edition, he says :

‘The expression, that a *miracle* is but the religious name for an event in general, and thus, that all that happens is a miracle, may readily fall under the suspicion of being intended for a direct denial of any thing miraculous; for, to be sure, if every thing is a miracle, then, on the other hand, nothing is a miracle.’ ” ‡

You proceed to comment on this passage in the following language.

“The explanation of Schleiermacher is, that the distinction between the events which we call, and those which we do not call, miracles, is founded not on any intrinsic difference, but solely on the manner in which they are regarded by the human mind; that is, if we regard an event in immediate relation to the power of God, by which it is produced, that event is to us a miracle; that, if we regard it as occurring in the ordinary course of nature, it is not a miracle. With these views, he says, that in his ‘Doctrines of Faith,’ notwithstanding the denial of absolute [proper] miracles, the religious interest in the miraculous is regarded and protected.” §

* *Reden*, p. 105.

† *Ibid.*, p. 135.

‡ *Remarks*, p. 44.

§ *Remarks*, pp. 44, 45.

This statement would lead an unwary reader to the suspicion, that Schleiermacher, like the Rationalists, Paulus, Röhr, Wegscheider, and so forth, attempted to resolve the miracles of the New Testament into ordinary occurrences, and discarded the belief in every thing that was not explicable by the familiar and regular laws of nature. We have already seen that this is not the case. Nor do the passages before quoted contradict the true meaning of the language, a part of which you have produced. It was the opinion of Schleiermacher that the miracles of Jesus were wrought by the power of God ; that they were manifestations and effects of the Divine Spirit which dwelt in him ; but he did not suppose that they differed from other events in proceeding exclusively from the immediate causality of God ; since, according to his views, the whole universe is constantly dependent on the Creator, and not an event can take place, which is not the product of the divine, omnipresent agency. He rejected the idea that the Creator ceased from his works, after the formation of the world, until his activity was again called forth in the performance of a miracle. But this idea is essential to the supposition, that the distinction between a miracle and a common event consists in the fact, that the one is to be referred to the causality of God, and the other to the causality of nature. I will own that I supposed, that this doc-

trine would find few advocates among any theologians at the present day. That its denial is not peculiar to Schleiermacher, I shall soon show by an appeal to the opinions of English writers on theology.

I will now present the whole passage relating to the subject ; and this will place the matter in a somewhat different light, from that in which it appears in your "Remarks."

"The controversy as to what event is properly a miracle, and wherein the true criterion of a miracle consists, how many different revelations there have been, and wherefore and to what degree we are bound to believe in them, and the manifest endeavor, so far as this can be done with any color of decency, to deny and set them aside, in the foolish hope of thus rendering a service to philosophy and reason,—this is one of the most puerile operations, in which metaphysicians and moralists have engaged in connexion with religion. They throw all points of view into confusion together, and bring religion into the discredit of interfering with the general validity of physical and scientific judgments. I entreat you, not to be deluded into any prejudice against religion, by their sophistical disputations, or as may sometimes be the case, by their hypocritical concealment of that which they would too gladly make public. Religion, however loudly it may call back those ideas which have fallen into such bad repute, leaves you your physics, and please God, your psychology also, untouched. What then is a miracle? Are you not aware, that what we call a miracle in its reference to religion, is the same, in other respects as a sign, a token, and that our appellation, which concerns merely the mental condition of the spectator,

is only so far appropriate, inasmuch as that which is intended for a sign, especially if it is at the same time something beside this, must possess such qualities, as will direct attention both to its presence and its peculiar significance. But every thing finite is in this sense a sign of the Infinite; and consequently all those expressions are intended only to point out the immediate relation of a phenomenon to the Infinite and to the universe; but does this prevent it from also bearing an equally immediate relation to the finite and to nature? The word miracle is only the religious name for an event; and every event, even the most natural and common, as soon as it is of a character to make the religious view of it predominant, becomes a miracle. To me, every thing is a miracle; and in your sense, only that is a miracle to me, namely something inexplicable and strange, which is none in mine. The more your hearts are penetrated with the spirit of religion, the greater will be the number of miracles which you would every where behold, and every dispute with regard to particular events, whether or not they are entitled to the name of miracle, produces in me only the painful impression of the poverty and barrenness of the religious feelings of the disputants. One party indicates this defect by a universal protestation against miracles; but this protestation shews only that they are not disposed to perceive the immediate relation to the Infinite and to the Godhead; and the other exhibits the same defect by attaching the principal importance to specific effects, and by assuming that no phenomenon can be a miracle, unless it appears in a wonderful form.” *

The whole of the explanatory Note on this passage, of which but a few lines only are quoted in the “Remarks,” is as follows.

* *Reden*, pp. 104, 105.

“ The expression here used, that the word ‘ miracle ’ is only the religious name for an event in general, and that hence every thing which takes place is a miracle, may easily incur the suspicion of leading to the denial of the miraculous altogether ; for certainly, if every thing is a miracle, then again, nothing is a miracle. But this expression is closely connected with the explanations which I have given in the ‘ Christian Faith.’ For if the reference of an event to the divine coöperation and efficiency, and the contemplation of the natural circumstances which conspired in its production do not exclude each other, it follows that the peculiar view which is first embraced must depend altogether on the direction of the attention ; as in general, when the connexion of an event with our own purposes interests us the most, but the investigation of the natural circumstances would lead us into too trivial details, we are most strongly disposed to observe the divine interposition,—and in the contrary case, the usual order of nature. But which of these two views will afford us the greatest satisfaction depends, in the first place, on our certainty of having comprehended the event in its intrinsic character, so that we can say with some degree of confidence, that it proceeded from the appointment of God, and in the second place, on the extent of our knowledge concerning the order of nature. Now all these differences are merely subjective, and would retain that character, even if the views of all men in every case of the kind were in entire accordance. Hence it remains absolutely true, that all events which awaken the strongest religious attention, and in which, at the same time, the order of nature is the least visible, will be, the most generally regarded by all men as miracles ; but it remains equally true, that considered in themselves, and as it were, from the divine causality, all other events are no less miracles than they. As then in discussing this subject in my

‘Christian Faith,’ the religious interest in the miraculous is recognised and secured, notwithstanding the denial of absolute miracles, it was here, likewise, my purpose, to represent this interest in its purity, and to free it from all foreign admixtures, which testify rather to a blind and senseless astonishment, than to the joyful recognition of a higher significance.” *

It is unnecessary for me, I presume, to enter into an argument for the purpose of showing that the divine causality is not concentrated in miracles, but is also at the foundation of the most common occurrences in nature. If the view which Schleiermacher rejects be insisted on, the evidences of Christianity will indeed be exhibited in a new light; but whether Christianity itself will be made to rest on stronger ground, the scrupulous theologian will hesitate to affirm. That this view has been opposed with no less earnestness by English philosophers and divines than by Schleiermacher, is well known to those conversant with the history of opinions; and I hardly feel called on to bring forward any proof of the fact. I will content myself with referring to two writers, who have perhaps never been grouped together before, but whose coincidence with each other on this point, as well as with Schleiermacher, affords a pleasing example of identity of opinion, with great diversity in cha-

* *Reden*, pp. 135, 136.

racter and circumstances. The resemblance both in thought and expression between the three writers must be striking even to the inattentive reader.

“It is not therefore a right distinction,” says Dr. Samuel Clarke, “to define or distinguish a miracle by any absolute difficulty in the nature of the thing itself to be done; as if the things we call natural, were absolutely and in their own nature easier to be effected, than those that we look upon as miraculous; on the contrary, it is evident and undeniable that it is at least as great an act of power, to cause the sun or a planet to move at all, as to cause it to stand still at any time, yet this latter we call a miracle; the former not. And to restore the dead to life, which is an instance of an extraordinary miracle, is in itself plainly altogether as easy as to dispose matter at first into such order, as to form a human body in that which we commonly call a natural way. So that, *absolutely speaking*, in this strict and philosophical sense, *either nothing is miraculous*, namely, if we have respect to the power of God; or, if we regard our own power and understanding, then *almost every thing, as well what we call natural, as what we call supernatural, is in this sense really miraculous*; and it is only usualness or unusualness that makes the distinction.” *

“Natural and supernatural are nothing at all different with regard to God, but distinctions merely in our conceptions of things. To cause the sun (or earth) to move regularly, is a thing we call natural; to stop its motion for a day, we call supernatural; but the one is the effect of no greater power,

* CLARKE'S *Works, Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, vol. ii. pp. 696, 697.

than the other ; nor is the one *with respect to God*, more or less natural or supernatural than the other." *

"I affirmed, that with regard to God, no one possible thing is more miraculous than another ; and that therefore a miracle does not consist in any difficulty in the nature of the thing to be done, but merely in the unusualness of God's doing it. The terms, nature, and powers of nature and course of nature, and the like, are nothing but empty words ; and signify merely, that a thing usually or frequently comes to pass. The raising a human body out of the dust of the earth we call a miracle ; the generation of a human body in the ordinary way, we call natural ; for no other reason, but because the power of God effects one usually, the other unusually. The sudden stopping of the sun (or earth,) we call a miracle ; the continual motion of the sun (or earth,) we call natural ; for the very same reason only, of the one's being usual, the other unusual. Did men usually arise out of the grave, as corn grows out of seed sown, we should certainly call that also natural ; and did the sun (or earth) constantly stand still, we should then think that to be natural, and its motion at any time would be miraculous. Against these evident reasons, this learned writer [Leibnitz] offers nothing at all ; but continues barely to refer us to the vulgar forms of speaking of certain philosophers and divines ; which (as I before observed) is not the matter in question.

"It is here very surprising that, in a point of reason and not of authority, we are still again remitted to the opinions of certain philosophers and divines. But, to omit this, what does this learned writer mean by a *real internal difference* between what is miraculous, and not miraculous ; or between operations natural, and not natural, *absolutely, and with regard to God?*" †

* CLARKE'S *Correspondence with Leibnitz*, vol. iv. p. 600.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iv. pp. 693, 694.

“It is not, indeed,” says Rev. James Martineau, “that God’s agency is either more powerful or more immediate in a miracle than in an event of nature. To the eye of pure reason, God is glorified as much by the serenest sun of summer, as by the darkness that was ‘on the land from the sixth to the ninth hour;’ by the bestowment as by the restoration of life; by the uninterrupted play of the healthy intellect, as by the reëstablishment of order amid its most terrible confusion. If we could see in their true light, what are called second causes, God would be glorified supremely in the eternal mechanism of nature, whose order is the order of his infinite mind, and whose energies are but the movements of his will. He would be glorified even in the laws of suffering, which, though seeming to desolate his works, would yet appear to be but the instruments of love, developing from creation some greater good. But our minds slumber on the regularity of the universe. The repetition of an act blunts our perception of power in its production : with the discovery of order in the succession of events, arises the association of cause and effect, and takes to itself all the ideas of power which had been connected with the unseen hand of Deity. So strong is this unreasoning tendency of our minds to relinquish, in the frequency of an event, all questionings respecting its spiritual source, that even of natural phenomena, the more rare strike into the mind of the coolest philosopher an impression of power, which the ordinary changes of moons and seasons do not awaken. If an inland lake under a serene sky should rise from its bed, break up its vast sheet into all the riot of tempest, and come rolling over fields that never drank of its waters before, there are few, whose hearts would not be startled by an emotion of natural religion ; whose astonishment would not be mingled with obscure notions of omnipotence ; who, to say the least, would not be nearer to

the conception of divine power, than when gazing on the ebb and flow of the ocean. Yet less power is adequate to raise a tide upon a lake, than to move the masses of the deep that forever lash a thousand shores. The tempest, the volcano, the eclipse, carry men's thoughts to God more readily than the breezes of summer, or the vegetation that crowns the mountain, or the uninterrupted light that is forever reaching us from other worlds. Yet God's power is not greater in the storm, than in a calm; in the fiery torrents that bury fields and cities, than in the new creation that restores the verdure to the waste; in the passage of a satellite across the sun, than in its motion through the unmarked spaces of its orbit. This effect of repetition on our minds, is not reason; it is not philosophy; it is our infirmity. If it be a mark of barbarian ignorance and superstition, to feel the terrors of Deity in the rolling of the thunder, and to tremble at the spirit that whispers in the breeze, the ignorance, the superstition, consists, not in discovering the traces of heaven here, but in seeing them here only. The man requires, not to get rid of these emotions, but to diffuse them over all the changes of the outward world. His feelings are juster and truer than those of the philosopher who, while he had lost the devotional impulses of uncultivated nature, has failed to learn from his science to see God in every thing, and every thing in God.

“Now a miracle is no more than a single and unrepeatd effect; it has no frequency to bind up the feelings in sleep; it is to all mankind what the convulsions and surprises of nature are to the barbarian; and hence it irresistibly awakens the sense of power. *Insulate any natural fact, and it becomes a miracle; repeat any miracle, and it becomes a natural fact.* If the sun had appeared stationary since the fall of Adam, its rising on the gardens of Paradise would have stood on record as the greatest miracle of Holy Writ, while its

standing still in the valley of Ascalon would have awakened neither wonder nor doubt. Beautifully does God's benignity accommodate his revelations even to the weaknesses of our minds. It signifies not that his power is gloriously exerted in every change of the outward world; it signifies not that perfected reason would see in the universe a temple pervaded by the living energies of Deity. If man discerns not these manifestations, God is not glorified: if man slumbers on these evidences, it is worthy of Divine love to awake him with the thunder-clap of power, to gratify his yearnings after the supernatural, and thus feed the sentiments of piety which are lulled to rest by the harmonies of creation. God, then, was glorified in the miracles of Jesus, because they enkindled in men's hearts a reverential sense of his sovereignty." *

It remains to notice your assertion that "Schleiermacher partook of the sacrament on his death-bed as a Christian." (Discourse, p. 44.) The only proper answer to be made to this statement, and to whatever it may imply, is an account of the last hours of the dying Christian. I give it in the words of Lücke.

"The death of Schleiermacher, in common with that of many great and noble individuals, possessed a powerful and quickening influence. It was the bright completion, the glorified image of his whole life.

"When the intelligence of his death was made known, not only in Berlin, but throughout Germany, nay, as far as the

* MARTINEAU'S *Discourse on the Father's Name glorified in Jesus Christ*, in BEARD'S *Family Sermons*. Vol. ii. pp. 268—271.

German name extends, every voice was raised in lamentation at the great and irreparable loss. His friends and pupils, his admirers, his adversaries, and even strangers, his audience in the church and the Academy, the whole city in which he had lived, the court and the people, vied with each other in paying the most imposing funeral honors to his remains. This was certainly not merely an external testimony to his elevated character. It was a great and beautiful tribute to his name. But this is not what I have in view. I speak of the inward history of his death. I have read what those who were nearest to him in life, and who did not leave him for a moment during his last days, have written for their friends. I am permitted to copy from it that which is suitable for a wider circle. 'His frame of mind, during the whole of his illness, was calm and bright. With the utmost gentleness he complied with all our arrangements. Not a sound of complaint or dissatisfaction was heard; always friendly and patient, though thoughtful and inclined to reflection. One day, as he awoke from slumber, that had been produced by an opiate, he called his wife to him and remarked: "I am really in a state which wavers between consciousness and unconsciousness, but within my own mind I experience the most delightful moments. I cannot avoid engaging in the deepest speculations, but they are always in accordance with the strongest religious feelings."'

"I see in this a beautiful illustration of his whole life. The man, whose life had been devoted to the attainment of a perfect unity between religion and speculation, but who modestly and cautiously regarded it, not as the beginning, but as the ultimate end of his contemplations, receives it as his reward and direction to heaven, in those moments when the outward man was perishing, in order that the inward man might ascend in freedom and purity, to the full enjoyment of eternal life in God. His last days and hours were pervaded and illu-

mined by the influence of religion. Even his dreams were the image of his religious life and course of action.

“ ‘I have had,’ said he at one time, ‘such a beautiful dream,—it has left me with the most agreeable feelings. I thought I was in a vast assembly, with a great number both of acquaintances and of strangers. They all turned their eyes upon me, and wished to hear from me something on religion. It was the hour of instruction, and with what delight did I give it!’

“As the awful moment drew near, he seemed to be more and more absorbed in love, as the innermost fountain of his being. He indulged in the most affectionate expressions concerning his children and friends. To the former he said: ‘I leave you for a legacy the words of John, “My children, love one another.”’ ‘I enjoin it upon you,’ said he to his wife, ‘to remember me to all my friends, and tell them how dear they have been to my heart.’

“He had for some time been certain of his approaching death. He could wish to have been spared longer to his family. He felt that he had still many difficult tasks to perform before his entrance upon eternal rest. But he went forth to the last struggle with calmness and submission to the holy will of Everlasting Love.

“ ‘The last morning of his life, his sufferings evidently increased. He complained of violent internal burnings, and the cry of pain, for the first and the last time, was forced from his lips: ‘Ah Lord, my sufferings are great!’ In the most affecting manner, he then said to his family: ‘My dear children, you must now all retire and leave me to myself. I would spare you the sight of so much misery.’ The traces of death were now apparent in his countenance, his eye grew dim, and the death-struggle was ended. Laying his two fore fingers on his left eye, as he often did when engaged in deep reflection,

he began to speak : ' We have the reconciling death of Jesus Christ, his body and his blood — . ' While saying this he raised himself up, his features became more animated, his voice grew clear and strong, and with priestly solemnity he continued : ' Are you one with me in this faith ? ' His family assenting aloud, he went on : ' Let us then receive the supper of the Lord. There can be no need of the sexton. — Quick, quick, for it is not the time to think of forms. ' While the service was preparing, his friends waited with him in solemn stillness. When every thing was ready, his countenance lighted up with an indescribable brilliancy : his eye beaming upon them with a higher glow of love, he commenced the words of invocation for the introduction of the holy ordinance. Then, repeating the form of consecration in a loud and distinct voice, he administered the bread and the wine, first to his family and then to himself, with the remark : ' I abide by these words of Scripture ; they are the foundation of my faith. ' After he had pronounced the blessing, his eye turned once more with an expression of perfect love, first to his wife, and then to every individual present, and, in those deep and earnest tones which penetrate the heart, he continued : ' In this fellowship and faith we are then one, and will remain so. '

" ' He now reclined on the pillow, the brightness still resting on his features. In a few minutes he said : ' I can remain here no longer. ' And soon after : ' Give me another position. ' They turned him on his side ; he breathed a few times, and life stood still. In the mean time his children had come in and were kneeling round the bed. His eye gradually closed. '

" ' In the pangs of sorrow and the feeling of elevation I can add nothing but the words of Scripture : ' Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. ' ' Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God ;

whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.' " *

Such were the opinions, such the life, and such the death of a man, whom you could prevail on yourself to designate as "one of the most noted of the modern German school of infidelity." The question might arise, If infidelity produces fruits like these, what value can we attach to faith? This question must be answered by those who regard as infidelity the opinions which have been described. Others, on the contrary, whose soul testifies to their truth, and their accordance with the teachings of Jesus, will see in the example of Schleiermacher, the power of faith in the Redeemer to overcome the world. It will speak to their own experience, reassure them in their convictions, and supply them with fresh evidence of the superiority of a living spiritual faith, to the bondage of the letter, or a blind adherence to tradition.

I have already occupied so much space with my account of Schleiermacher, that I should not feel justified in entering at equal length upon a discussion of the theological opinions of De Wette. Nor is it

* LÜCKE's *Erinnerungen*, translated in the *Christian Examiner*, vol. xx. pp. 44--46.

necessary. They coincide, to a great degree, with those of Schleiermacher ; and many of the statements which have now been made concerning them, are applicable to the views of his fellow-laborer and friend. The points at issue, moreover, are contained within a narrower compass ; those which involve general principles may be despatched in a few words ; and those which may be deemed of a personal character, I freely leave, in their present state, to the decision of the reader. Your elaborate defence of your translations from De Wette, though somewhat ambiguous, does not, as far as I can perceive, maintain their verbal correctness ; if it does, any further controversy in regard to them, though it might be amusing, would be hopeless ; and as to the degree of misrepresentation, which you endeavor to abate, the German scholar must judge for himself.

The principal question which now concerns us, relates to the opinions of De Wette on the divine authority of the Christian revelation. You class him among the German Naturalists by whom "the authority of revelation as teaching the fundamental facts of religion is rejected," and assert that "according to his views, what we regard as the miraculous evidence of Christianity, is of no value." How far this statement does justice to his conceptions, may be seen from the passages which I now produce.

I. CONCERNING DIVINE REVELATION.—“Although we can conceive of nothing relative or limited in what is divine, we must yet admit degrees in the manner of its revelation. Men cannot bear the full splendor of the divine light at once, and therefore it is gradually displayed.—But there must be a point in the development of the religious life, when the appearance of the perfect takes place; I do not say, when the development has attained its object, and is brought to an end, for in that case, history itself must cease; but when this object is clearly perceived, and its attainment actually anticipated; when men are directed to the only true path, and shone upon by the light of unerring truth. This is realized, when a man reaches the highest degree, in knowledge and action, for which God has created us; and when he exhibits this as the rule and example for all others, and attracts them to its pursuit and reception. In such a revelation, since it completes the culture of human intelligence, the divine intelligence is manifested in the flesh; God is seen as the mediator in the form of man, and divine honor is paid to the Son of Man, in whom he appears. By this revelation all longing is satisfied; all doubts are hushed; and it will be received by all who are prepared for it, because they find in it what they seek; because it expresses the inmost forebodings of their soul. No new revelation follows this, since every new revelation could be only a repetition of its all-comprehending character. The reception and appropriation of this revelation, the observance of its rules, the imitation of the example which it exhibits, now form the only object of endeavor in the culture of man. The aid of the Divine Spirit is required for this, which conducts individuals to the true path, and subordinates the varieties of human nature to the eternal unity. Men with the Spirit of God, will arise from time to time; but no new mediator or divine mes-

senger, no herald of the divine will, which has been already revealed and proclaimed." *

"The knowledge of God, which may be called the central point in the history of intellectual culture, is imparted to man only through the medium of revelation. By this, we understand, in general, an immediate knowledge, an actual observation, as it were, of divine things. We know nothing of the objects of our experience, except by means of actual observation; we should have no conception, for instance, of an animal or plant, except by observation; and where our personal observation is wanting, we must have recourse to that of others; and this we appropriate to ourselves, as a secondary, historical knowledge. This secondary knowledge is true for us, so far only as it agrees with the results of our previous, actual observation. The description of an animal, contrary to all analogy, like a bird with four wings, would hardly find credit. Now religious knowledge is not to be obtained by experience, for no mortal eye has ever seen God; but this also in its origin must be immediate. You may say, that it is the product of reflection. But you forget that reflection produces nothing, gives nothing new to the mind, but merely clears up, brings to distinct consciousness, what was there before. Now, there is certainly in the human mind, implanted by nature, an immediate knowledge of divine things, which can be brought to consciousness, by outward excitement in the contemplation of nature. 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head.' We have accordingly pointed out a divine instinct in

* *Religion und Theologie*, pp. 97—99.

man, directed to eternal things. We may call this the eternal or inward revelation, because it is the same unchangeably in all men. And although it is given to man by the constitution of his spiritual nature, and in that respect is natural, it is yet more correct to call it supernatural, because the whole nature of the spirit depends on it, because it is the ground and support of all spiritual manifestations. Hence the Scriptures justly regard the Spirit of God as the source of this revelation. 'It is the divine spirit in man, even the inspiration of the Almighty, that giveth him understanding.'* This inner revelation is the ground and subject of all reflection on divine things. The understanding brings clearness to its immediate teachings, but contributes nothing towards them. It possesses the faculty of voluntary reflection; this it may apply to the inward revelation; but it can no more give the revelation to itself, than it can produce the perceptions of the senses.

"But this revelation alone does not impart the knowledge of God to the human race in general. Only scattered rays of light shine transiently upon the darkness; but the clear and permanent light of day, by which the darkness is expelled, cannot thus arise. This is given only by the revelation in history, the external revelation, when the divine is manifested in the human, in a peculiar and extraordinary manner. Such a revelation is made, when the Divine Spirit acts on the intelligence of a man with such fulness and power, and the original, immediate knowledge of God appears with such clearness and purity in its secondary manifestations, that even these are regarded by the beholder as an original product, since they reflect, as in a mirror, his own deepest consciousness, and this manifestation, like the inner revelation in his own

* Job xxxii. 8. (Noyes's Translation.)

breast, becomes the source of divine knowledge, and commences a new epoch in human development. A necessary characteristic of revelation is truth. Its teachings must coincide with the eternal revelation in every human breast. But all truth cannot claim to be revealed. The essential character of revealed truth is its freedom and originality. It cannot be a product of the progress of the mind; but it must advance and elevate the mind, in an extraordinary manner, by its own independent power. But since in the phenomenal world, nothing can be regarded as the absolutely first and independent, but every thing is connected with some previous event, it is evident, that all which claims to be revelation, may be regarded also in such a natural, historical connexion; and no definite limits can be placed to this mode of contemplation; since no point can be imagined in the phenomenal world, where the connexion of things is broken. A connexion between revelation and previous events is always exhibited at least in this,—that it shows a progress in the same line of cultivation, though many intermediate steps are passed over. And in this way, it is true, a view of the history of religion and of cultivation may be embraced, in which every thing appears as the work of the free development of the human spirit; and this view is by no means to be rejected; on the contrary, it is both necessary, and in the highest degree instructive and quickening. But it ought not to be the only and the highest view; nor does it claim to be this. For it is incomplete and unsatisfactory; since the difference always remains between what is original and what is a mere copy; and the first can never be explained from any connexion of circumstances; and we are obliged therefore to have recourse to a higher causality. This natural view accordingly must yield to the supernatural view, which in every process of development regards the original manifestation as divine rev-

elation. Since the primitive element of the soul must be conceived as supernatural and divine, as the breath of the divine spirit, the original manifestations in history can be considered not otherwise than divine; and this in two respects, first as the work of the Divine Spirit, and secondly, of the divine government. In the first respect, revelation is regarded as something separate, the breaking forth of a distinct, individual light; but in the second respect, it is interwoven with the whole course of the world's history, designed, as a star, arising in heaven according to the eternal order, to enlighten the world." *

"We must recognise in Christianity the most perfect manifestation of religion. It comprises the whole circle of religious emotions; and brings to distinct consciousness all the ideas of God, immortality, the eternal destiny of man and order of the world. In reason, we acknowledge a divine revelation, that is, the primitive, natural revelation; and in Christianity, which gives us a clear insight into this original revelation, we perceive a second, historical revelation. The Old Testament also contains a divine revelation; but only so far as it refers to the New Testament; for that revelation does not possess an independent, unconditional value. What then is it, which gives Christianity the character of a divine revelation? Men usually find this in its miraculous history, and in the extraordinary endowments and powers of its author; but these do not constitute its essence; they are only the outward splendor which radiates from it. Its divine impress consists in its intrinsic character, and the power by which it arose. This inward characteristic is the complete development and formation of all the religious elements of the reason, or the most perfect reason; that by which the

* *Christliche Sittenlehre*, vol. i. pp. 150—155.

reason is completely satisfied, both as regards feeling, knowledge, and morality. The assertion that Christianity is above reason, according to our present use of language, is an absurdity. It arose, in the first place, from using the word 'reason' in the sense of 'understanding;' and in this view, there is truth in the assertion; for certainly the understanding must acknowledge its limits in matters of religion. In this sense also, the assertion is correct, that the reason of individuals must recognise something higher in the Christian revelation, to which it is bound to submit, not indeed slavishly, but with self-surrendering confidence. But Christianity cannot be above reason, considered in itself; for in that case we could not embrace it; and God, if he had manifested what was altogether new to the human reason, would have contradicted himself, and transformed his original creation, by means of which we have received certain endowments. Christianity, indeed, is a new spiritual creation; but only so far, as the pure reason originally placed in every man is fully completed and brought to consciousness. We can say nothing higher of Christianity, than that its intrinsic character is the most perfect reason; we do not thus deny its divinity, but acknowledge it; for reason itself is something divine. The controversy between the Rationalists and Supernaturalists, as they are called, proceeds from mere misapprehensions; as is evident from the fact, that neither the words 'Rationalism' and 'Supernaturalism,' nor the ideas attached to them, are justly opposed to each other. Rationalism, or the view embraced by reason, is not opposed to Supernaturalism, or the doctrine that Christianity is of supernatural origin; for the reason acknowledges the supernatural, and includes it in itself; but Naturalism, or the doctrine that the highest in human life, and hence also reason, is the effect of necessary, natural causes, is the only true antithesis to that system.

Super-rationalism is the opposite of Rationalism; but a theological system which should assume that name, would thus brand itself with absurdity; for what is above reason, is by that very fact unreasonable.

“But though we call Christianity the highest reason, we do not mean that it is the product of human inquiry and reflection, or attained by study and learning, like other, human doctrines. It sprung, by divine power, from the original fountain of truth; it contains immediate, not derivative truth; it is animated by an inspiration far surpassing the knowledge of the understanding; and therefore it affects the soul more powerfully than any other doctrine; and deserves a confidence which we can give only to the immediate truth itself. Christ, certainly, made use of the doctrine of the Old Testament, and even of that of the sects of his time; all that he set forth was not mere novelty; but he used every thing with the original power of the Spirit, and impressed it with the seal of his own individuality; every thing in him was free creation, the effect of an independent divine power, which needed not the usual resources of human wisdom. A faith in the revelation in Christ is connected with the faith in his Godhead; one depends upon the other. Because we find in him this originality of knowledge, we believe that God was in him; and because God was in him, he received his profound insight, not in a human manner, but from divine inspiration.” *

“In England, where the torpidity and coldness of the established Church impelled the mind to revolt, there arose, towards the end of the last century, together with the sectarian spirit, that irreligious and presumptuous struggle for freedom, in the so-called Deism, a doctrine which directed the reason of the individual man to itself, regarded the

* *Ueber die Religion*, pp. 448—456.

guidance and revelation of God in history as superfluous, and committed itself only to nature. The usual mode of proving the Christian revelation by miracles and prophecies was contested; and nothing but reason admitted to confirm the truth of Christianity. Nay, many went so far as to doubt of the reasonableness, soundness, and purity of the Christian doctrine, especially in a moral point of view.—In Germany, the bands which united the teachers of the Church with the established creeds were gradually loosened, or wholly destroyed. Frederick II. allowed perfect freedom of the press, in his dominions; and every superficial spirit made use of it to attack religion. The tendency of the English and Germans to thorough investigation, introduced historical and critical researches into theology, which was thus sustained by the increasing knowledge of antiquity. But these researches were not always favorable to the Church. Since men regarded and treated the Bible and the Christian history in a natural light, and destroyed the miraculous brightness which had hitherto surrounded them; since they saw many prejudices disappear, found many points of the doctrine of the Church untenable, discovered human and temporal elements in what had claimed to be divine, and in this process of examination were not elevated by a firm faith, nor guided by a comprehensive idea, it followed that scarcely any thing was protected from doubt, and the whole fabric of Christianity tottered. The finishing stroke was put to this movement by the philosophy of Kant, which subjected the whole system of human knowledge to a rigid criticism, established human reason on itself alone, made it the supreme judge in matters of faith, and thus favored presumption, but, at the same time, by its speculative direction prepared the way for truth. Under its influence, a kind of philosophic theology was formed, which regarded the Christian religion as a human and natural

phenomenon, although the best means for the education of humanity, submitted its truth to the decision of reason, and undertook to purify it from all the local and temporary opinions, with which it had been combined. As the Kantian philosophy directed the attention especially to morality, this theological Rationalism regarded the moral element in Christianity as every thing,—the rest merely as an external support. Much as this theology was employed with the interpretation of Scripture and the history of the Church, it never obtained a living conception of history, nor did it deserve the noble name of Rationalism. The view, that Christ was to be regarded only as a teacher, not as a Redeemer, that it was to be wished that his person might have remained unknown to us, designates the spirit of this theology, and its monstrous confusion. This Rationalism was a necessary phenomenon; it manifested the extreme of the one-sided direction to speculative knowledge, which hitherto had often changed its forms, but was still essentially the old Scholasticism.” *

II. CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.—“ We find, in the Scriptures, that the men by whom revelations were made, are represented as inspired, full of the Holy Ghost; but, at the same time, they are called and sent by God; and in this respect they hold a definite place in the series of revelations ordained by Divine Providence; and are the instruments of God for the accomplishment of his purpose in regard to the human race. Christ also is filled with the Holy Spirit, but in an infinite degree; because he is infinitely exalted above all prophets. On the other hand, he is not merely one of the divine messengers, like the prophets; but he is the representative of the Godhead revealing himself; his image, the reflection of his glory, the Divine Word or the Divine Wis-

* *Christliche Sittenlehre*, vol. ii. part ii. pp. 343—346.

dom.—Christ is the Divine Wisdom, because all the light of the knowledge of God, which had before appeared to men, was concentrated in him, the light of the world, so that all former light appears not so much as a preparation, as the out-flowing of the light in Christ.* He has completed the revelation of God, because he knew what was in man in its immediate fulness and depth, and announced it to the understanding in words; because he declared to us what he ‘had seen and heard,’ and what ‘the Father had taught him,’ as he brought to light faith and love, or all the ideas of truth and good; and thus displayed in himself the unity of the divine and the human, as an eternal image and model. This unity can now be merely striven after, and introduced into human life; but beyond it, nothing new or better can be found.” †

“Jesus called his doctrine, the doctrine of God; his work, the work of God; and himself, the messenger and Son of God. The prophets also of the old covenant were regarded as messengers of God, and the kings, as servants of the theocracy and representatives of God, were called the sons of God. But all this was only an indication of the perfect reality which appeared in Jesus. In the same sense, no man had ever been the messenger or the Son of God; for no man had announced divine truth in such purity, and so perfectly fulfilled the word of God on earth as Jesus. All former messengers and representatives of God had been imperfect, erring, and sinful men; but Jesus was free from error and sin; and God dwelt in him with his wisdom and holiness, with the fulness and power of his Spirit. They who saw and heard him, who yielded to his enlightening and saving influence, felt the elevating and saving presence of God; the

* “The spirit of the prophets was the spirit of Christ.” 1 Peter i. 11.

† *Christliche Sittenlehre*, vol. i. pp. 155, 156.

glory of God was manifested to them; they beheld, as it were, God himself." *

“‘The Word,’ says the Apostle, ‘was in the beginning with God.’ The revelation of God, which is perpetually unfolding in nature and history, has its origin in the beginning of things, is not the work of a finite power, but of the agency of God. ‘And the Word was God,’ says the Apostle. God has wholly manifested himself in his Word, in his revelation; he is to be known in all that he has done, and all that he imparts to man, because he wholly acts therein not only in himself, in his concealed, unfathomable being, but also in the creation and government of the world, and in the manifestation of himself; and hence also is he to be known wholly in Christ, in whom he personally appeared; Christ and the Father are one.

“There is a profound significance in the words, ‘the Word was God.’ There is no man, no people, to whom some word, some revelation of God has not been granted; but not every revelation of God is God himself, or wholly adequate to his nature. Even the heathen had conceptions of God, though impure; their idolatry represented certain powers or attributes of God; but they worshipped the creature instead of the Creator, and turned the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man; to them the Word was not God. To the Israelites, God spoke in divers manners by the prophets; and they had purer knowledge of the Supreme Being. But they did not know God completely as he is, in his word and revelation. The Old Testament revelation was purer and more perfect than that of the heathen; still, God himself was not in it, but only portrayed in laws, constitutions, and images. Christ was first the Word of God, which was

* *Ueber die Religion*, p. 442.

God himself; whoever saw him, saw the Father. But among those who believe in him are many, who do not know him, as he is one with the Father, to whom the Word is not God. We will not speak of those who, with Arius, fall into the error of regarding Christ as a created being, elevated, it is true, above all other creatures, but still not equal with God, or of the same essence with him; for this error has long since been rooted out of the Christian Church. Neither will we here introduce those who deny the Godhead of Christ, and regard him as a mere man; for their error is too remote from the sense of this passage. We will here speak directly of those only who admit the Godhead of Christ, but who do not so conceive of him, that his Word is to them God himself, that they immediately perceive and honor God therein. This is the case with those Christians, who do not believe in the Christian revelation, because divine truth itself has appeared in it, but demand for it other proof, than it contains within itself; who are not drawn to it, by purely spiritual attractions, who do not receive the spirit of Christ in itself, nor recognise God in his glorified form; but who cling, with idolatrous service, to the letter of his doctrine, to the external circumstances in his appearance; and who are rather drawn from God than to him, by his person which they blindly honor. The personal elements in Christ are of infinite importance for faith; but only so far as God is manifested in them; he who loves them for other reasons, to him the Word is not God. 'It is the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.' * *

III. CONCERNING MIRACLES.—“Jesus converted water into wine in an extraordinary, and wonderful manner. The spec-

* *Die Heilige Schrift ausgelegt*, vol. i. pp. 13—15.

tators perceived in this action, a sign or a manifestation of the glory of Jesus, and therefore believed in him, that is, they acknowledged him as the messenger and Son of God, endowed with the divine spirit and the power.—

“This act may be regarded by us also, as a sign of the spirit of Jesus; and it is so important, that we may contemplate it, under all its aspects, with astonishment and admiration. It is wonderful and mysterious. Jesus transformed the water into wine, by the power over nature, which was imparted to him, and which we cannot comprehend. As he possessed the divine power of will in freedom, and the infallible power of knowledge, so that he was without sin and error, so likewise he exhibited from time to time the divine omnipotence which lay hid within him, and produced extraordinary effects in the sphere of nature. As he introduced a new creative movement into the spiritual world, he also acted on external, corporeal nature; and this felt the movement, as it were, in sympathy. The extraordinary supremacy of Jesus over nature is to us a sign of his divine mission, as proof that a higher spirit dwelt within him; and we contemplate it with humble reverence, since it so far surpasses our knowledge and power. On the other hand, it is not without encouragement for us. The spirit of wisdom and holiness, which was in Christ, may be imparted to us, if we believe in him, although in a less degree; the exercise of wisdom and a firm will gives us a power, to a certain extent, over external nature; and herein is Christ a model for us. Though we cannot act so marvellously, as Christ did, though we must use instruments and second causes to subject nature to our service, still, it is always the power and freedom of the spirit, which we employ, and which give us a mastery over nature.” *

* *Die Heilige Schrift ausgelegt*, vol. i. pp. 48, 49.

“ In the case of Nicodemus, we see one who was led to Jesus merely by faith in his miracles. But although his faith was first awakened by admiration of the acts of Jesus, he still deserved the confidence of our Lord, who entered into conversation with him, and pointed out to him the requisites for a true faith. We perceive from the manner in which Nicodemus addressed Jesus, that his faith in miracles was not a barren astonishment, not a mere outward excitement ; for he acknowledged, from the signs which Jesus had wrought, that God was with him ; he recognised in him, a higher and divine spiritual power. We hence see that a faith in miracles is not always to be slighted ; we should esteem and use it as a preparation for the true faith ; and treat with forbearance those who need its excitement. But a faith in miracles is never more than an introduction to the true faith, as Jesus here makes use of it only as a means of transition to higher knowledge.” *

I might multiply extracts of a similar import, to a great extent, from the various writings of De Wette ; but I need not continue the labor ; the general character of his theology may be understood from what has now been brought forward ; and on a future occasion I hope to give a more complete discussion of the subject. I presume no one will be disposed to class De Wette with any school of infidelity, after reading the passages adduced ; for, as in the case of Schleiermacher, the question may be presented, If such views be infidelity, what is Christianity ? It has been seen that he holds to the su-

* *Die Heilige Schrift ausgelegt*, vol. i. pp. 65, 66.

pernatural origin of the Christian revelation ; that he regards Jesus as possessing the fulness of the Divine Spirit ; and that he recognises in the miracles which he wrought the signs and illustrations of his Divinity. The history and experience of this theologian afford a cheering support to the believer, in a skeptical age. His life has been devoted, for the most part, to critical inquiries ; he was early thrown into the great conflict of modern times ; no man has shrunk less from difficulties ; he has faced every objection that learned research has suggested ; he has never failed to be true to his own doubts ; he has followed them to their last results ; tradition and authority have never bound his free spirit ; and admitting the full force of scientific conclusions, he clings to Christianity as the revelation of God ; faith and reason, feeling and philosophy, Supernaturalism and Rationalism, have found in him their mutual completion and reconciliation.

In thus presenting the views of the distinguished theologians who have formed the subject of this Letter, I would not be understood to cherish any anxiety in regard to their introduction among ourselves. I have no doubt that, sooner or later, they will attract the attention to which they are entitled ; they will be examined, discussed, and justly appreciated ; they will be sifted by clear and unpreju-

diced minds ; the chaff will be separated from the wheat ; and whatever noble and quickening truth they may be found to contain, will be welcomed with love and joy.

If they can aid us in our endeavors to attain a thorough comprehension of Christian truth, to build up a sound and living theology, which shall reconcile all differences, satisfy the intellect, win the heart, and bless society, we shall avail ourselves of their aid ; if not, we shall cease to look for help to a source whence help cannot come ; we shall remain contented in the exercise of our own thoughts, seek out wiser and safer guides, go back to the old paths in peace, or strike out others which promise to be still more straight and excellent than any that have yet been opened to our choice.

For my own part, I am persuaded, that the theology which we have considered, contains the germs of many pure and vital truths ; more than this can scarce ever be claimed for any system ; that it composes a perfect whole, finished in all its parts, doing justice to every attribute of God, or every faculty of the soul, and incapable of further illustration and improvement, will not be pretended by those who believe that the law of gradual progress is the great law of the Universe ; but I cannot conceal from myself, that the essential principles of this school are already hailed by many devoted lovers of

religion and science, "as the vital, profound, and ennobling theology which they have earnestly sought for, but hitherto sought in vain."

It is not to be supposed, however, that the product of a foreign soil can be completely naturalized in another clime ; or, that, without important changes in its form, it can be made to take deep root at all, and produce fruit. Nor is this desirable. The efforts of great minds abroad, at best, can be only an imperfect assistance to our own thoughts ; our opinions must proceed from our own inquiries ; for, like religion, no conviction is of any value, unless it be personal. The form, which philosophy and theology,—the highest philosophy,—will at last assume among our thinking men, cannot now be predicted ; but we may be sure that it will be no imitation of an obsolete model ; it will not be cast in foreign moulds ; it will possess the freshness and originality of genuine life ; but, at the same time, its intrinsic vigor will prevent the dread of increasing light, though from strange and remote sources.

I cannot close this Letter, without adding a few words, in regard to the character of the theology which is presented in your "Discourse" and "Remarks." Its radical defect, in my opinion, proceeds from the influence of the material philosophy on

which it is founded. The error, with which it starts, that there is no faculty in human nature for perceiving spiritual truth, must needs give rise to the other errors which I have formerly pointed out, and which will be rejected, one would hope, as soon as their character and tendency are understood.

You maintain that "there can be no intuition, no direct perception of the truth of Christianity," (Discourse, p. 32.) and that "the feeling or direct perception of religious truth," is an "imaginary faculty." (Remarks, p. 56.) Revolting as this statement appears, when presented in its naked form, it is the legitimate and unavoidable consequence of the philosophical system which grounds all possible certainty on the testimony of the senses, and allows no distinct and independent reality to the testimony of the soul. I honor the mental consistency which accepts and asserts this consequence, far more than the effeminate timidity which shrinks from it, and would fain keep it out of sight. Truth is usually promoted, by following out every path to its ultimate limit. We thus learn to what it leads, or that it leads to nothing; and in either case, we may be induced to retrace our steps.

The principle, that the soul has no faculty to perceive spiritual truth, is contradicted, I believe, by the universal consciousness of man. God has

never left himself without witness in the human heart. The true light has shone, more or less brightly, on every man that cometh into the world. This Divine Spirit has never ceased to strive with the children of earth ; it has helped their infirmities, given them just and elevated conceptions, touched their eyes with celestial light, and enabled them to see the beauty and glory of divine things. God has ever manifested himself to his intelligent creatures ; but have they had no faculty to behold this manifestation ? Did the ray from above fall on sightless eye-balls ? Not so. There has always been truth in the world ; man has never been quite shut out from intercourse with his Maker ; the early patriarchs communed with the unseen Father, as they wandered over the verdant plains of the East ; the meek spirits that yearned after divine knowledge, among oriental bards and Grecian sages, were not blind to the heavenly vision ; “the ignorant savage has believed in God without the aid of metaphysics ;” and when the full-orbed Sun of Righteousness and Truth arose upon the world, in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth, it was hailed by the unlettered fishermen of Galilee, and has been revered by the most faithful spirits in every succeeding age, as the visible manifestation of the Eternal glory. Must there not have been an eye for this ? Does the body see, and is the spirit blind ? No.

Man has the faculty for "feeling and perceiving religious truth." So far from being imaginary, it is the highest reality, of which the pure soul is conscious. Can I be more certain, that I am capable of looking out, and admiring the forms of external beauty, "the frail and weary weed in which God dresses the soul that he has called into time," than that I can also look within, and commune with the fairer forms of truth and holiness, which plead for my love, as visitants from Heaven?

In the exercise of this faculty, man is able to behold the presence of God in the phenomena of the universe. The glory of the invisible Spirit beams from the visible creation, and is recognised as such, by those "whose eye is single, and whose whole body is full of light." The same faculty reveals to them the sacredness of their moral nature, invests conscience with divine authority, shows them the baseness, as well as the guilt of sin, makes them meekly grateful in view of their affinity with the Supreme Power, and enables them to read the law of God, which is written on the heart. This perception, moreover, gives them "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." They see the Father in the person of the Son. They feel that God was with him who displayed such divine grace and truth. They perceive the express image of his perfections, in the character of Jesus, and embrace

him as the Saviour of their souls, and the light of the world.

The denial of this faculty in the higher nature of man, of course, leads to the endeavor to make truth dependent on external support. It will thus be valued, not for what it is in itself, but for the circumstances in which it appears. Its intrinsic authority will fail to be recognised; its affinity with the soul, if admitted at all, will be only as a barren formula; and all inward feeling of its reality, "the tasting that the Lord is gracious," "the judging for ourselves what is right," will be rejected as visionary or presumptuous. Religion is thus removed from the sphere of consciousness, and subjected to historical conditions. The certainty of faith must proceed from reliance on others; not from a spiritual witness in ourselves. The humble Christian can put no trust in his Redeemer, till he is assured of its safety from the lips of the learned. The researches of the critic are deemed of greater importance than the experience of the believer. The royal priesthood of faith is dishonored, and a hierarchy of scholars installed. The wise after the flesh must sit in judgment on the teachings of the spirit. The character of a revelation is no proof of its divinity; the signatures of an heavenly origin borne on its front are unworthy of account; nothing is valid but the evidence of miracles; the prophets and divine

messengers of old who uttered the burden of the Lord, without external attestation had no claims to inspiration ; and even "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God," which, in every word of its promises, every tone of its rebuke, every expression of its truth, exhibits "the power of God, and the wisdom of God to salvation," must rely for its support on the fact, that "it was authenticated by miracles as coming from God."

A faith, thus founded on historical testimony, with no reliance on the inward feeling or perception of truth, can never attain to positive certainty. I do not see how any mind can derive from it the repose which our nature craves. Without a higher faith than this, I know, that to many, life would be a burden, duty but a name, and religion a dream. The serene assurance of the reality of immortal truth, which is imparted by the contrary doctrine, cannot rest on such a basis. Hence the confession, that "there is no absolute certainty, beyond the limit of momentary consciousness, a certainty that vanishes the instant it exists, and is lost in the region of metaphysical doubt." (Discourse, p. 30.)

The soul of the Christian, as I understand Christianity, seeks a higher boon than this. He demands a certainty of a different character, from that which can be enjoyed in the unstable affairs of this life, in the transactions of earthly business, "in the

establishment of a manufactory, or the building of a railroad." "The things which are seen," he knows, "are temporal;" subject to manifold fluctuations; perpetually eluding the firmest grasp; incapable of giving assurance or repose to the immortal soul. "But the things which are not seen," he is equally certain, "are eternal;" when every thing earthly has passed away, they will remain; and in the worship of undying truth, of spiritual beauty and goodness, he finds a source of sustaining convictions, and a perpetual and "exceeding great reward."

The enlightened believer, it seems to me, cannot rest satisfied with a mere balance of probability, decided by intellectual researches. This would leave his heart dry and impoverished. It is the nature of faith to cling to its objects with earnest grasp, to throw around them the warm light of the affections, and to incorporate them with the deepest and most sincere experiences of life. Its tone is that of confidence; in its best moments, of triumph; habitually, of serene and joyful trust. It discards negations; it will accept nothing but truth; it acknowledges the efficacy of the Divine Spirit to inform the soul, not as a theological phrase, but as a daily reality. Its language is, "I know in whom I have believed; I know that my Redeemer liveth;" and in perpetual communion with the spirit

of holiness and love, it beholds the presence of God.

With such views of the character of the Christian faith, it is not surprising, that the ground assumed in your recent publications, should call forth my strong and earnest opposition. I do not regret, however, that you have attempted to maintain it. The question is now before our religious community. It will not be settled without thorough, and I trust also, candid discussion. The results cannot but be favorable to the interests of truth. That they may be equally favorable to the interests of charity and peace, is the sincere wish of

Yours, &c., &c.,

GEORGE RIPLEY.

Boston, *February* 22, 1840.

THE END.

H 128 82



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2006

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



APR 82

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 130 172 3